

Raleigh Police Advisory Board

The Police Advisory Board serves as a liaison between the Raleigh community and [City Council](#). The board will help build trust and relationships between the [Raleigh Police Department](#) (RPD) and the community.

The board has conducted an analysis of the “Executive Summary” and “After-Action Report: George Floyd Protests and Response May 30, 2020 – June 7, 2020” issued by Raleigh Police Department – Chief Cassandra Deck-Brown and the Office of Professional Standards Inspections Unit. Hereafter the entire 51-page document will be referred to as “the document,” the Executive Summary will be referred to “the Summary,” and, the After-Action Report as “the Report.”

Introduction

The document was extensive and contained reports from various offices and sections of the RPD. For the sake of simplicity and readability, the board’s analysis will focus mainly on Saturday, May 30, 2020 and highlight observations and other related information in the document. Please note that this is not an exhaustive analysis, just a description of key areas that should be addressed.

The board’s analysis would like to note there are missing details in the reports covering events of the nine days in May. The most appalling omission was the rioting that occurred along Raleigh Boulevard in Southeast Raleigh when the actions of White radical protesters incited an already angry and frustrated community to loot and vandalize its own businesses in the Food Lion Shopping Center that serves this struggling area.

This Southeast Raleigh shopping center and the criminal assault done to it was not specifically mentioned in the document, like some downtown businesses that also suffered damage. These business owners were just as much victims of this protest/riot as the downtown, North Hills, and Cameron Village business owners. This is a vulnerable area in our city. Yet any other day – or night – there is usually a highly visible and heavy RPD presence. But not for these residents and businesses on May 30. In fact, on June 1, *“the National Guard functioned as static security on this and subsequent evenings at locations such as: North Hills Mall, Triangle Town Center, Crabtree Mall, and Cameron Village. They did not move about as a roving patrol. Staying in place as a perimeter security element.”* (Report, p. 13). Again, the protest/riot that extended to this Southeast Raleigh area did not merit being mentioned in the document, that is, the Chief’s Executive Summary nor the After-Action Report.

The Intel

Three protests were scheduled for Saturday, May 30. Two of the protests were scheduled for 10:00 a.m. They were the “No Justice, No Peace Rally” to be held at Nash Square and the “Walk for Ahmaud Arbery” at the Bicentennial Mall. The third scheduled protest, “Walk the Iron”, was at 11:00 a.m. at 18 West Jones Street which is across from the General Assembly in the Bicentennial Mall. The “No Justice, No Peace Rally” and the “Walk the Iron” events were cancelled.

The Raleigh Intelligence Center (RIC) report did not include the name of the organizers of the two cancelled events. However, the board discovered the organizer for the “Walk the Iron” event in a

[WRAL.com article posted on Saturday, May 16.](#) This is important to mention as an armed demonstrator not affiliated with any group attended the event. Teeter was featured in a CNN.com article concerning the Boogaloo movement, which will be described later in the analysis. The “Walk for Ahmaud Arbery” march was peaceful with 30 to 40 participants. This event ended around 1:00 p.m. **(Report, p. 25).**

The RIC received information that an unplanned march called “Raleigh Demands Justice National Day of Action” would take place at 5 p.m. It was advertised as a nonviolent event on social media, and the march began on the courthouse steps. While the Raleigh Intelligence Center issued a bulletin to RPD that the event would have only have 75-100 participants, over 1,000 people were in attendance. **(Report, p.26).**

After various individuals spoke and before the group started their march, Sheriff Gerald Baker took the time to speak with them. Thereafter, the report lists *“the participants began marching through downtown Raleigh. The intended route of the march was unknown.”* The Special Operations Division (Special Ops) report stated that *“the crowd eventually began to focus their attention on the driveway ramp that leads to the Public Safety Center on the McDowell Street side.”* After peacefully gathering on McDowell Street for approximately an hour, the protesters’ behavior **suddenly escalated**. Protesters began to throw objects at the Public Safety Center, shattered windows of the building, and ultimately marched up the ramp...” **(Report, p. 17).**

The Summary gave a similar account of this incident: *“At approximately 6:41 p.m., **the event took a definitive turn** when protesters rushed into the sally-port of the Wake County Sherriff’s Office on McDowell Street”* **(Summary, p. 1).** There was no indication in either account that RPD officers provoked the protesters to act in this way. It was if on cue they turned and began to storm the sally-port. The Chronology recounted that when the sally-port of the Wake County Sherriff’s Office (WCSO) was under attack by the protester, *“WCSO deputies can be heard over the radio stating, ‘They’re throwing glass and bottles back here at the ramp,’ and ‘You need to step it up coming to the jail!’”* **(Report, p. 4).**

Then according to the report *“RPD Officers responded to the area, and a small squad took up position in the garage entrance north of these deputies. These officers were not equipped with riot gear, as they had been operating under the premise of a peaceful, protest response.”* **(Report, p. 4).**

The problem with this statement is that the RIC report stated that they received information on Friday, May 29, 2020 that *“...a direct action against the Raleigh Police Department Downtown District station”* was planned for that evening. *“The [Twitter] post advised participants to ‘dress for conflict’ and to use direct messaging on Twitter to communicate with the organizer regarding further details.”* According to the RIC report this information was share with RPD’s sworn and civilian staff by way of the departmental email as well as *“state and county partners in downtown Raleigh.”* **(Report, p. 25).**

The next day, Saturday, May 30th at 4:00 p.m., a briefing was held for all personnel working the protest. There were no details given about the subject matter(s) share at the briefing. Although the direct action did not occur on Friday, hopefully, RPD personnel working the protest also received the information passed on by RIC through the departmental email.

Hopefully, the officers that were not dressed in riot gear – but hopefully, had their gas masks – assisting the Sherriff’s deputies were also in attendance at the briefing. And hopefully, field command reminded them of the Friday email and warned them to stay alert. The warning was necessary because the Special Ops’ report stated that *“late in the afternoon [on Saturday], there was a noticeable increase in vehicle and pedestrian traffic to the downtown area. An unusually large number of vehicles with out-of-state*

registration plates were observed circulating in the downtown area. Several pedestrians were observed carrying backpacks, oven mitts, jugs of milk, goggles, and other items that appeared to corroborate an earlier social media message stating, 'Dress for conflict.'” (Report, p. 16).

The specific time of this observation was not given in the Special Ops’ report that would have been very helpful to know whether this observation was made before or after the 4:00 p.m. briefing. Nevertheless, the officers sent to assist the deputies should have been on alert as anything could happen because this was not one of the three protests scheduled for Saturday. What assistance exactly did these officers give to the deputies?

The Attack on Sally Port

The board understood the attack on that garage by the protesters posed a very serious security threat. This area at the Public Safety Center is where deputies and other law enforcement, like RPD officers, transport inmates to and from the jail. Once that gate is up the staff and jail are vulnerable.

The response of the deputies to deploy tear gas was absolutely justified as it was the deputies’ duty to “defend the building.” This first strike by the protesters occurred around 6:41 p.m. *“At approximately 9:05 p.m., WCSO deputies on the second floor of the parking deck overlooking Davie Street deployed tear gas in response to property damage occurring at the Wake County EMS station below them.”* (Report, p. 6).

This also was a security threat and made the EMS crew vulnerable as they would have to respond to emergency calls. In both instances, the deputies simply responded to an action initiated by the protesters. They did not initiate the night of rioting that followed the first attack. The WCSO has the responsibility to protect county personnel and property no matter where they or it are located.

Splinter and Swarm

It was estimated that when the over 1,000 protesters had joined the march, the police did not know the march’s route, but the protesters did. In the analysis by the board, it’s clear that the movement of the protesters was well orchestrated. It was not by chance that the crowd suddenly turned their attention to the sally-port of the county jail.

“Protesters had begun to display a pattern of splintering off into smaller groups, gathering together again, initiating antagonistic and often illegal action towards police and government property, then splitting up again when police were forced to react. This pattern became more pronounced at night, as a large portion of the peaceful protesters went home, and those who remained in the area displayed a greater tendency toward destructive, anarchic, and criminal behavior.” (Report, p. 6).

Protest by Design

The board observed how the reports recounted that the 1,000 plus protesters started off as one large mass of people, and then suddenly as if an alarm went off or a secret signal was given, they split up into smaller but still large groups going in different directions.

They were able to move to various sections of the city practically undetected and unstoppable as if they had rehearsed the Saturday protest until there were no design flaws. Particularly in the downtown area, the groups would “splinter and swarm” entrapping police who needed to be rescued on several occasions. The board recognizes how frightening and chaotic this must have been for RPD. There were three incidents where officers needed to be rescued and one that involved the Fire Department, which are detailed in pages 4-7 in the report. It was very concerning to the board to read the description of these incidents. Thinking of the 34 officers that found themselves in the middle of McDowell Street with the group of protesters about to descend upon them, the board raised the following questions:

What tactical plan would have ensured the safety of these officers? For example, although the officers were in riot gear, they did not seem to have adequate defensive equipment. Could the Mobile Field Force have been in a strategic place in that immediate area so they could spring into action when the crowd’s attention turned on these vulnerable officers? Why were RPD officers not present when the firemen responded to the fire at the Dollar General?

Why didn’t the RPD have aerial surveillance to track the protest groups’ movements especially as they left the downtown area and started migrating throughout the city? Perhaps, RPD will make plans for the use of a helicopter and/or military grade drone if an event escalates in the future.

How had RPD been preparing for the demonstrations? The board felt that RPD had been under surveillance. It was as if perhaps someone wanted to observe their reactions, their response times, their tactics, their munitions and how they used them. Did the RPD follow the demonstrations taking place in other jurisdictions like Minneapolis, MN; Rochester, NY; and Portland, OR?

“The Enemy of My Enemy”

The actions of the protesters were deliberate not impulsive. *“Protesters had begun to display a pattern of splintering off into smaller groups, gathering together again, initiating antagonistic and often illegal action towards police and government property, then splitting up again when police were forced to react. This pattern became more pronounced at night, as large portion of the peaceful protesters went home, and those who remained in the area displayed a greater tendency toward destructive anarchic, and criminal behavior.” (Report, 6).*

A statement listed in the document mentioned that *“a pattern would continue over the next few days in Minnesota, involving peaceful protests during the day, and an eruption of violence at sundown.” (Report, p. 3).* Who is to say that the same protesters that started at 6:41 p.m. were the same ones that ended the protest/riot around 5:00 a.m.? The RIC report noted that *“several participants in the march were observed to be dressed in a manner consistent with individuals prepared for black bloc...” (Report, p. 27-28).* This “black bloc” is an interesting protest movement-style of its own. The Public Affairs Office reported that *“...these platforms allowed protesters to arrange meeting locations throughout the city and coordinate protest efforts that sometimes overwhelmed police resources as large, coordinated groups of protesters converged on specific areas of downtown.” (Report, p. 33).* The Public Affairs report also stated, *“As the evening went on, the Public Affairs Office posted messages informing the public that the RPD was responding to calls of riots and break-ins throughout the city.” (Report, p. 34).*

As stated previously, it was “a protest by design.” It was no coincidence that the protesters were able to infiltrate our city at will. This thing was a well thought out plan. So, the board would like to describe the city’s “enemy.”

Enter the boogaloo movement. The “Boogaloo Bois” or “Blue Igloo” took a stroll through downtown Raleigh several weeks before the events of May 30. A photo of one of the group’s members with a rocket launcher strapped across his back went viral. When asked in an email if the group was in Raleigh to protest, the group’s email response was that “the walk on Saturday wasn’t a protest, it was a gathering to support our God given freedoms as Americans...We headed out for a walk to get some fresh air, sunshine, and some much needed exercise...We are a peaceful group, and wish to keep it that way at all costs...We aren’t looking for a fight...We want put on a smile, shake some hands, and be friendly.”

Again, “boogaloo” is a movement. And as such, it does not have a natural body but is embodied in a common belief that is embraced by a number of organized and sometimes loosely organized groups. The board has researched and found several articles about this movement and the diverse groups that embrace it. Below is a sampling of information available about the boogaloos:

- [“The Origins of the Extremist Boogaloo Movement” on WBUR.org](#)
- [“Heavily Armed Extremist Movement Gains Traction” on CNN.com](#)
- [“Boogaloo Alt-Right Protesters Raleigh”](#)

And, the caption under a photo in the CNN article reads: “A member of the Boogaloo Bois walks next to protesters demonstrating outside Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department Metro Division 2 just outside of downtown Charlotte, North Carolina, on May 29, 2020.” Was the RPD and/or RIC aware of this before the Ahmaud Arbery march at 10:00 a.m. or the 4:00 p.m. briefing or a peaceful protest that turned chaotic on Saturday?

Munitions Used

The Deployment of Resources provides a munitions chart, the bulk of which were used during the May 30, 2020 protest/riot. Interesting enough, according to the chart, no munitions were used after May 31st. It’s important to note that the Deployment of Resources report stated: *“While the RPD did deploy some expired gas canisters, there is no scientific evidence to support claims that expired CS gas contains harmful levels of cyanide.” (Summary, p. 2).* CS gas is commonly known as tear gas.

The lack of scientific evidence about possible health hazards of expired CS gas is good; however, is there a city policy in place addressing the use of expired chemical munitions such as tear gas canisters and the city’s liability in using such munitions? The reason is because of the possible mental and physical adverse effects that these expired chemical canisters could have had on both peaceful and rowdy protesters, innocent bystanders including people living in the downtown area, media personnel, and law enforcement officers not wearing gas masks in the next six months, year, or 10 years from now.

For example, consider the affect that Agent Orange has had on many of our Vietnam War veterans and their families. If there is not a city policy about the use of expired chemical munitions, a city policy should be expedited immediately that clearly forbids any so-called expired chemical munitions to ever be used by the Raleigh Police Department. As for the statement about scientific evidence, the only evidence

presented in the document was a statement that did not cite a scientific paper on a long-range study that gave evidence of this expired chemical being harmless to the health and well-being of people. And is there a chemist on the RPD staff or who serves as a consultant to the RPD that could guide them on when tear gas canisters are subject to become deadly?

Also, the document stated that *“the Raleigh Police Department has historically kept a supply of chemical munitions, specialty impact munitions, and distraction devices that are mainly employed during tactical situations such as barricaded subjects and hostage rescue operations.”* (Report, p. 41). With all of this in mind, the board suggests that the RPD personnel in charge of the munitions do a monthly inventory of these chemical munitions.

The other statement the board would like the address is “Historical Deployment.” It stated that *“while training has occurred over the years, the Raleigh Police Department has only deployed gas a few times in the last 46 years.”* (Summary, p. 2). It was two times: in 1968 when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated (52 years ago) and, in 1974 when Coach Norm Sloan and the NC State men’s basketball team won the NCAA Championship (46 years ago). So, one could understand the pure shock of the police department when things suddenly went sideways in the usually peaceful capital city. The RPD had only been training for a riot but had never had the opportunity to test that training in real action – until now.

Protest Expenditures Report

The City of Raleigh is like any other municipality as it runs off of federal, state, and local money. So, it must give an account of every penny of these funds. The “Incident Costs” report from the RPD’s Fiscal Management Unit was shoddy. This report, which was supposed to account for all the money spent on the nine-day operation, was a totally unacceptable document to present to the Mayor, City Counselors, and City Manager. This nine-day event was *“unlike anything experienced by Raleigh Police Officers of the modern era”* or by the citizens of Raleigh. (Report, p. 47). There should have been more than a general chart of a few of the expenditures along with a flimsy narrative. The nine-day operation by the RPD had to be a financially huge operation for the city and especially for the RPD’s budget. Therefore, a professional, comprehensive, line-by-line financial report should include a comprehensive spreadsheet showing a breakdown all the expenses incurred. Even the report from the Raleigh Intelligence Center gave a more comprehensive and detailed view of what took place over the nine days.

All things financial are important to the life’s blood of any organization, company, or government. So, it is very important for the “keepers of the purse” like the Fiscal Management Unit to stay up to date with all money spent especially since the monies involved are public funds, that is, taxpayer dollars. The purpose a detailed account is to see whether the expenditures were justified. For instance, the report stated, *“Food and hydration provided to officers who worked throughout the week and were not able to leave their assignments to secure their own meals was included in the cost analysis.”* (Report, p. 45). No one would disagree with providing food and hydration for the officers assigned to work this nine-day operation; however, justification of the expenditures requires a detailed spreadsheet and narrative. Therefore, one might expect a real cost analysis to show where the meals came from; what meals were served – breakfast, lunch, dinner, and/or in-between meal snacks; the cost of each meal and the total cost for each day; how many RPD officers were served during each meal and the daily total; meals to non-RPD personnel that assisted and that number; the cost of each meal and the snack (the number of snacks, the cost per snack and the total, remaining number of snacks). The narrative needed to include: the city’s meal per diem and explain what meals exceeded the per diem on what day(s) and the reason.

Other costs incurred may have been the setup, operation, and dismantling of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the staging areas. **(Report, p. 17)**. And if any supplies for these areas required rentals, show and explain what was rented, why it was needed, for how long, and from where (the rental company), and staging areas are where the meals were served. Some of the Go Raleigh buses were used to transport the Mobile Field Force but how many were used, for how long and who drove them was not disclosed. **(Summary, p. 3)**. The Fiscal Management Unit needed to take look at the cost of everything utilized in this 9-day operation and present all the expenditures in a detailed and professionally prepared report to be included in this document.

Conclusion by the Police Advisory Board

Following the events that took place on May 30, the board advises the Raleigh Police Department to address the following items, in order to effectively protect the community during protests that may escalate in the future.

Evaluate police training with an outside consultant.
External evaluation of RPD training programs will help determine if the tactics and methods their officers used can measure up to the needs of today and not the standards of 40 years ago. An updated training program should also include hands-on training on how to deploy tear gas, as well as scenario-based training that was featured in an article by Police Magazine .
Develop a tactical plan.
Careful planning and training around aerial surveillance, modern protesters' strategies and movements, and instincts to engage the opposition should be considered. RPD should be aware of how other large cities have handled violent protests.
Create a policy to ban the use of expired tear gas.
The RPD report notes that police deployed expired gas canisters on May 30. While research cited in the report suggests there is no scientific evidence that expired tear gas contains cyanide, it also doesn't provide details if there are long-term side effects. In addition, a monthly inventory should be completed by RPD to avoid using expired munitions in the future.
Provide accurate and comprehensive budget reporting.
The "Incident Costs" report from the RPD's Fiscal Management Unit lacked a detailed account of expenditures related the nine days of events. A professional, line-by-line financial report should be provided to the public, showing a breakdown of all the expenses incurred. A comprehensive report is needed to justify how taxpayers' dollars were used.
Recognize and protect Southeast Raleigh.
RPD often demonstrates protection and surveillance of Downtown, North Hills, and the Cameron Village areas but fails to acknowledge vulnerable communities in Southeast Raleigh.