

CITY COUNCIL RESEARCH DIVISION LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY



JEFFREY R. CLEMENTS
Chief of Research
(904) 255-5137

117 West Duval Street
City Hall, Suite 425
Jacksonville, FL 32202
FAX (904) 255-5229

Bill Type and Number: Ordinance 2020-584

Introducer/Sponsor(s): Council Member Dennis

Date of Introduction: September 22, 2020

Committee(s) of Reference: NCSPHS, R

Date of Analysis: September 24, 2020

Type of Action: Ordinance Code amendment

Bill Summary: The bill amends the Ordinance Code by creating a new Chapter 79 - Jacksonville City Council Citizen Review Board. It provides for the appointment of citizens by the City Council to the board, the purpose of which is to "...foster transparency, enhance communication and ensure a relationship of trust and respect between the City of Jacksonville and the community by creating an unbiased panel of citizens to review completed cases and issues relating to law enforcement that are of importance or of interest to the community and the City, and to increase and demonstrate police accountability and credibility with the public."

Background Information: The new chapter provides for the appointment of 14 citizen members to the board representing each City Council district, each serving up to 2 two-year terms. The Sheriff's Office may designate a non-voting liaison to attend CRB meetings to explain JSO policies and procedures and to provide law enforcement expertise. The CRB is required to meet monthly, and preferably quarterly, for the purposes of: 1) reviewing completed internal office investigations of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office ("JSO") and cases and issues of importance or interest to the community or the city; 2) through review of completed JSO investigations, determining whether the investigation and disposition of the case was consistent with JSO policies and procedures; 3) making recommendations to the City Council regarding JSO's handling of investigations or other issues of importance, and determining whether any revisions or additions to the City's Ordinance Code, the City Charter or other legislative action is necessary to address recommendations of the CRB to City Council; and 4) reporting its findings and recommendations to the City Council, with copies of its reports and recommendations submitted to the Mayor and the Sheriff. The CRB would be staffed by the City Council staff.

In November 2016 the Office of General Counsel, responding to a question from a council member, issued a memo on the subject of police citizen review boards (CRB) which said, in part: "Whether the Council may by ordinance alone create a CRB depends on (1) the structure of the CRB, (2) the timing of the CRB activities, and (3) the role the Council seeks to give to the body." It went on to describe certain duties expressly reserved to the Sheriff by state law which a CRB could not perform and described several feasible options for CRBs, which include a disciplinary-recommendation model, a legislative-investigative audit model and an executive-investigative audit model.

Policy Impact Area: Citizen ability to review and comment upon law enforcement activities and issues

Fiscal Impact: Undetermined

Analyst: Clements