

**CCA Board Meeting Agenda
December 1, 2025**

1. Call to order

2. Introduction by Chair John Williams

The Citizen Complaint Authority was established in 2003 under the Collaborative Agreement and a Memorandum of Agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice. We are a seven-member board with a professional investigative staff, headed by a director. Staff investigates allegations of misconduct by police officers and, through the director, forwards the findings and recommendations to the board. Our decisions are based upon a legal standard known as a “preponderance of the evidence.” *Simply stated, the question is, “Does the greater weight of the evidence favor one side or the other?”* Our area of inquiry is solely whether the officer’s actions conformed to Cincinnati Police Department policies, procedures and training.

Our findings generally will be one of the following: (1) Unfounded: where the investigation determined no fact to support that the incident actually occurred; (2) Sustained: where the allegation is supported by sufficient evidence to determine the incident occurred and the actions of the officer were improper; (3) Not sustained: where there are insufficient facts to determine whether the alleged misconduct occurred; and (4) Exonerated: where the greater weight of the evidence indicates the alleged conduct did occur but did not violate police department policies, procedures and training. Our findings and recommendations are forwarded to the City Manager for final determination.

3. Mission Statement

Per Article XXVIII., the Citizen Complaint Authority's (CCA) mission will be to investigate serious interventions by police officers, including but not limited to, shots fired, deaths in custody and major uses of force, and to review and resolve citizen complaints in a fair and efficient manner.

4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

5. Director’s report presented by Director John Kennedy

6. CPD response to CCA recommendation R2509-R2514 presented by IIS Lieutenant

- #R2509
 - CCA is concerned about the unprofessional and antagonistic interactions between Officer Bohn and citizens in this encounter and in a previous CCA case. This is the second recommendation for Officer Bohn to receive additional training to better engage with citizens to create more trust between CPD and the citizens of Cincinnati. His previous incident with a different citizen occurred on February 10, 2024 (reference CCA Case 24038). The initial recommendation for Case 24038 comes after the review of Officer Bohn’s BWC which showed him being unprofessional and using profane language to address a citizen.
 - While the incident for this case is a different situation, it is CCA’s hope to minimize future encounters where Officer Bohn is discourteous and potentially antagonistic towards the citizens of Cincinnati. Attending a Diversity and/or Customer Service training may provide Officer Bohn with other options in any future encounter with citizens who are compliant but are argumentative.
- #R2510
 - In this case Officer Bohn and Officer Buckler both unholstered their firearms while seated in their police cruiser in the parking lot of the Shell gas station.
 - The rules Cincinnati Police Officers must follow regarding the unholstering of a firearm are found CPD Procedure Manual 12.550 Discharging of Firearms, which states (in part):
 - “At such time as a police officer perceives what he interprets to be a threat of loss of life or serious physical harm to himself or others at the hands of another, he has the authority to display a firearm, with finger outside

the trigger guard and have it ready for self-defense. The finger is only to be placed on the trigger when on target and ready to engage a threat.”

- Additionally, CPD Manual of Rules and Regulations 1.25 CPD Section One- Failure of Good Behavior states:
- “1.25
 - A. Members of the Department shall only draw or display their firearms in time of demonstrated need or for official inspection. Members shall not use or handle firearms in a careless or imprudent manner.
 - B. Members shall not use, or handle department issued weapons in a careless or imprudent manner. This rule applies to any department issued weapon except firearms, which are covered under Rule 1.25A.”
- In CCA’s respective interviews with Officer Bohn and Officer Buckler both disclosed that they had unholstered their firearms while parked in the lot of the Shell gas station when they were approached by Mr. Brown. Both Officer Bohn and Officer Buckler both cited officer safety issues, specifically that at the time Mr. Brown initiated contact with them they were not sure if they were going to be attacked.
- Officer Bohn and Officer Buckler’s unholstering of their firearms was observed in CCA’s review of BWC footage. Further review of the footage showed that both officers unholstered their weapons, with Officer Bohn holding his on his lap with the muzzle pointed at the interior door of the police cruiser and Officer Buckler holding his in a low ready position on his right side while his door was partially opened for the duration for their contact with Mr. Brown at the gas station. The firearms were never pointed at or displayed to Mr. Brown as they were not within his view.
- Only CPD Procedure 12.550 Discharging of Firearms and Rules and Regulations 1.25 CPD Section One- Failure of Good Behavior were found to address when an officer can unholster their firearm. Of these two guidelines, only 1.25 CPD Section One- Failure of Good Behavior addresses when an officer is permitted to unholster, or “draw”, their firearm. In this regulation it only states that an officer is permitted to, “draw or display their firearms in time of demonstrated need or for official inspection”. No further clarification is provided.
- CCA recommends that CPD Procedure Manual be updated to include when, and under what circumstances an officer may unholster, or “draw”, their firearm. This is not currently addressed in the CPD Procedure Manual which only accounts for the displaying and discharge of a firearm by officers.
- Additionally, CCA recommends that CPD Manual of Rules and Regulations 1.25 CPD Section One- Failure of Good Behavior define the term “demonstrated time of need” to reduce ambiguity and clarify for officers the circumstances when they are permitted to unholster their firearms during the course of their duties.
- #R2511
 - In Officer Bohn and Officer Buckler’s interaction with Mr. Brown both officers demonstrated a lack of understanding in regard to CPD procedure, specifically related to search and seizure, thoroughness of investigations, discourtesy, and proper activation/ deactivation of BWC. It is CCA’s recommendation that officers receive additional training regarding these subjects.
- #R2512
 - CCA recommends that Officer Bohn be partnered with a more experienced police officer. In this case, as well as two other recent cases (CCA case #: 24038 and 25103), Officer Bohn was either working by himself, or in this case with a younger officer with less patrol experience. Partnering Officer Bohn with a more experienced Cincinnati Police officer may provide him with guidance for better understanding of CPD Procedure and CPD Rules and Regulations, to make better decisions in the field, and improve his professionalism.
- #R2513
 - The case was very complex and included very minimal evidence (no paperwork and no BWC). CPD’s social media policy is vague and antiquated at best and needs to be updated to include specifics on the personal use of social media accounts.
 - Various police department policies were researched from around the country and a recommendation is being made to update the social media policy (CPD Procedure § 14.205 social media (Revised January 28, 2021)
 - CCA recommends that the following be added to CPD Procedure § 14.205 social media:
 - While CPD has some of the following language in their policy CCA recommends the following language:

- “Public employees occupy a trusted position in the community, and thus, their statements have the potential to contravene the policies and performance of this department. Due to the nature of the work and influence associated with the law enforcement profession, it is necessary that employees of this department be subject to certain reasonable limitations on their speech and expression. To achieve its mission and efficiently provide service to the public, the Cincinnati Police Department will carefully balance the individual employee's rights against the department's needs and interests when exercising a reasonable degree of control over its employees' speech and expression. Department personnel should always be aware that privacy settings and social media sites are constantly in flux, and that they should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is protected. Department personnel should always carefully consider the implications of their speech and any other form of expression when using social media. Finally, department personnel forfeit any expectation of privacy with regard to anything published or maintained through file-sharing software or any internet site open to public view.
 - A. Precautions and Prohibitions
 - Department personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech and expression does not impair working relationships of this department for which loyalty and confidentiality are important, impede the performance of duties, impair harmony among coworkers, adversely impact the disciplinary process, or cause disruption to the department, or to any other city agency.
 - As public employees, department personnel are cautioned that speech, on- or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties - that is, that owes its existence to the employee's professional duties and responsibilities - is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline. Department personnel should assume that their speech and expression, and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their official capacity and this department.
 - Department personnel will not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information to which they have access to as a result of their employment or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of this department without written permission from the Chief of Police.”

- #R2514

- ***Definition of Abuse of Authority***

- At its core, abuse of authority occurs when an officer misuses the powers of their position for personal gain, interest, or advantage.¹ It occurs when an officer uses their official position not for the public good, but for their own benefit. The CPD Manual of Rules and Regulations § 1.13 states: “Members shall not, at any time, use or attempt to use their official position, badge, or credentials for personal or financial gain.” Similarly, the CCA has traditionally defined Abuse of Authority as, “Misuse of one's official position, including by (but not limited to) engaging in improperly coercive conduct or by mistreating persons. Such conduct includes misusing one's official position, through coercive behavior or otherwise, in order to obtain personal benefits, even if those benefits have relatively little financial value.”
- While these definitions provide a general understanding, they lack the specificity needed for more effective evaluation of abuse of authority allegations. Therefore, CCA proposes the following, more precise definition to CPD and the following test:

- “*Abuse of Authority* is the misuse of powers, privileges, or symbols by a CPD

¹ Cf. 5 C.F.R. § 2635.702 (Similar to Abuse of Authority, Section 2635.702 Subpart G of the Code of Federal Regulations - Misuse of Position; Use of Public Office for Private Gain, states in-part, “An employee may not use his public office for his own private gain or for that of persons or organizations with which he is associated personally.”).

employees that extends beyond the scope of their official duties or in a manner not allowed legally, ethically, or by departmental standards to gain personal benefit, regardless of value. This includes for example:

- Preferential treatment for oneself or associates (e.g., avoiding a complaint, using status for discounts or services);
- Coercion, threats, or intimidation relying on the officer's position of power, rather than legal justification;
- Decisions or actions based on personal animus, favoritism, or retaliation;
- Actions that exceed legal boundaries for illegitimate purposes, such as settling personal scores or furthering political agendas.”
- This definition provides clarity, flexibility, and a strong ethical foundation. By focusing on personal benefit, it effectively distinguishes abuse of authority from other misconduct such as excessive force or negligence. It encompasses both overt misuse of status and more subtle forms of favoritism or retaliation. Having a shared definition of Abuse of Authority between CCA and IIS also helps establish consistency. This definition aligns with professional ethics and administrative policies, underscoring the principle that officers are entrusted with authority to serve the public, not themselves.

7. Public comment period (not to exceed 3 minutes)

8. General discussion

1. CCA #25103 Robert Hall

9. New business

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. CCA #25046 Ahmed Taylor | 4. CCA #24190 Keanna Williams & KJ (Minor) |
| 2. CCA #24193 Vanessa Marcum | 5. CCA #25053 Monica Brandy & Garry Black |
| 3. CCA #24238 Jessical Jones & Kenneth Jones | 6. CCA #25100 Leesa Thurman |

10. Announcements

11. Adjournment to executive session (if required)

12. Reconvene if necessary (if required)

Thank you for viewing and attending the CCA Board meeting today.

Remember, CCA is here to help you address any concerns you have regarding interaction with a Cincinnati Police Officer. While CCA's primary purpose is to investigate specific allegations of serious misconduct by CPD, even if your concern does not fall within CCA's purview, CCA will send all concerns or commendations to CPD on your behalf.

The next Board meeting will be on **Monday, January 5, 2026**, at 5:00 pm. Copies of any of the investigation summaries discussed today are available on CCA's website at www.cincinnati-oh.gov/ccia.

13. Adjournment

bu