



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE SHERIFF CIVILIAN  
OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING HELD  
ONLINE AT: <https://bit.ly/3AKs4hy>  
[coc.lacounty.gov](http://coc.lacounty.gov)**



**Thursday, July 15, 2021**

Attachment: [Video](#)

Present: Chair Lael Rubin, Vice Chair Casimiro Tolentino, Robert Bonner, Patti Giggans, James P. Harris, Sean Kennedy, Priscilla Ocen, Xavier Thompson, and Executive Director Brian K. Williams

## **1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS & CONSENT CALENDAR**

- **Call to Order**

Chair Rubin welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Rubin provided an overview of the agenda and requested staff take roll and Commissioner Kennedy lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Rubin advised the public that they may submit written public comments by visiting the link at [coc.lacounty.gov](http://coc.lacounty.gov) and all submissions will be part of the official record. Following the announcement, Chair Rubin moved to the Consent Calendar.

- **Approval of Consent Calendar**

No members of the public commented on this item. Chair Rubin announced the next Commission meeting date needed to be moved due to Yom Kipper. Due to Commissioner conflicts with the proposed new date, Chair Rubin called on the Executive Director to survey a new date. There being no objection, the remaining items on the consent calendar were approved, including the [June 17, 2021 meeting minutes](#).

## **2. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

### **2a. Family Impact Remarks**

Chair Rubin reported one Family Impact Remarks request was received from the family of Anthony Vargas. Lisa Vargas, the mother of Anthony Vargas shared her remarks. Chair Rubin thanked Ms. Vargas for her comments and reassured that her complaints are being examined. Chair Rubin then moved to item 2b.

### **2b. Election of Officers: Nomination for Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission**

Chair Rubin called on Vice Chair Tolentino to proceed with public comment followed by the election of Chair. There was 1 member of the public who commented on item 2b. Following public comment, Vice Chair Tolentino announced Lael Rubin and Priscilla Ocen as nominees for Chair. Commissioner Ocen and Chair Rubin each shared their

vision as Chair, if elected. Commissioner Thompson posed questions to the nominees regarding their role as Chair, if elected. Vice Chair Tolentino called on staff member Ingrid Williams to take a roll call vote for the election of chair. On a 5 – 2 vote, with one abstention, Commissioner Ocen was elected as the new Chair of the Civilian Oversight Commission. Chair Rubin congratulated Commissioner Ocen on being elected as new Chair and called on staff member Ingrid Williams to take a roll call vote to reappoint Vice Chair Tolentino. On a 7 – 1 vote, Vice Chair Tolentino was reelected.

Following the vote of Chair and Vice Chair, Chair Rubin moved to item 2c.

## **2c. Discussion regarding the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department activity in Venice Beach and other areas to address the unhoused population**

Chair Rubin announced the presence of Sheriff Alex Villanueva, Los Angeles County Sheriff Department (LASD), Lieutenant Geoffrey Deedrick, and Los Angeles County Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Director Heidi Marston. Chair Rubin expressed concern over the Sheriff's involvement in areas outside of his jurisdiction. On June 30, 2021, the Commission sent this [letter to Sheriff Villanueva regarding Venice Beach actions](#) and received this [response](#). Sheriff Villanueva highlighted the LASD Homeless Outreach Service Team (HOST) and their efforts to regulate public space at Venice Beach. He cited government codes 26600, 26601 and 26602, which outline the duties of the Sheriff's Department, and noted his responsibility to police the entire jurisdiction of Los Angeles County.

Commissioner Thompson inquired about the legal aspect of LASD venturing into LAPD jurisdiction without invitation and called on County Counsel and the Inspector General to inform the Commission on the subject. Commissioner Bonner questioned if the Sheriff was invited to Venice Beach by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). Sheriff Villanueva advised he had received numerous requests from various individuals but was not invited by LAPD. He reported the LASD HOST is currently assisting in other cities as well. Sheriff Villanueva reported the position of an elected Sheriff has the authority to intervene in all cities throughout the County of Los Angeles.

Commissioner Ocen inquired about the number of individuals assisted by LASD and if any arrests had been made. Lt. Deedrick provided statistics on the number of unhoused individuals on the Venice Beach boardwalk who received assistance from HOST and in what capacity, and he confirmed no arrests had been made. Commissioner Ocen called on the Inspector General and County Counsel to address the Sheriff's legal authority in other jurisdictions. Inspector General Max Huntsman confirmed that the Sheriff does have legal authority to occupy any city within Los Angeles County. County Counsel's Alexandra Zuiderweg advised that she is not knowledgeable of the Sheriff's legal authority in other jurisdictions and requested researching the issue further. Vice Chair Tolentino shared his concerns over LASD resources being used in other jurisdictions unnecessarily and without any significant impact. Lt. Deedrick advised of HOST responsibilities and identified organizations they collaborate with. He noted HOST is also a co-response team of LAHSA and have assisted in various jurisdictions. Following Sheriff Villanueva and Lt. Deedrick's comments, Chair Rubin introduced LAHSA's Director Heidi Marston, who [outlined the best practices](#) to serve the unhoused

population and services provided by LAHSA. She identified 5 key components needed to move the unhoused into housing and provided examples.

Following Ms. Marston's presentation, Chair Rubin opened the floor for Commissioner questions. Commissioner Ocen inquired about inmates who are released from jail and what efforts LASD is making to provide housing to those who are unhoused. Sheriff Villanueva identified outreach providers inside the jail, Diversion and Re-entry, and Alternatives to Incarceration as efforts currently being utilized by LASD.

Following Commissioner questions, Chair Rubin moved to public comment. There were 27 members of the public who commented on item 2c, including comments made by Matthew Reiser.

The meeting recessed at 12:23 p.m. and reconvened at 12:38 p.m. Present were Chair Lael Rubin, Robert Bonner, Patti Giggans, James P. Harris, Sean Kennedy, Priscilla Ocen, Vice Chair Casimiro Tolentino, Xavier Thompson and Executive Director Brian K. Williams. Following the recess, Chair Rubin continued with item 2d.

## **2d. Subpoena Ad Hoc Committee Report: Potential Issuance of Subpoena Concerning Documents Appearance and Information Requests**

Chair Rubin advised the Subpoena Ad Hoc committee was requested to evaluate the need to issue a subpoena, and Commissioner Bonner advised the committee met July 9, 2021 to discuss the possible issuance of a subpoena. He reported the committee decided against issuing a subpoena requiring the Sheriff to fulfill requests made by the Inspector General, but unanimously agreed to issue a subpoena for the Sheriff to appear at the next Commission meeting. Commissioner Bonner made a motion to request the full Commission authorize the issuance of a subpoena for Sheriff Villanueva to appear at the next Commission meeting to answer questions about his conduct outlined in [Commissioner Kennedy's Memorandum re: Villanueva administration's investigation of oversight officials, etc.](#) LASD sent this [response to the memo](#).

Commissioner Kennedy shared his views on the issue and briefly discussed his concern over the Sheriff's decision to launch and announce investigations against oversight officials, including the Inspector General who are performing the duties of their job.

Commissioner Giggans disagreed with the motion and suggested agendizing the issue for further discussion. Commissioner Ocen agreed the Commission cannot remain silent to the Sheriff's attempts to harass and intimidate his oversight body, and she acknowledged support of the subpoena and recommended developing a strategy on when to invite the Sheriff and extending an invitation to County Counsel, the District Attorney and the Attorney General.

Commissioner Thompson questioned if the Sheriff had already been invited to address the issue. Commissioner Bonner reported the Sheriff had not received an invitation and noted the committee did not consider that option to avoid litigation. Commissioner Bonner stated, "it is inappropriate for law enforcement to be investigating persons that have by law oversight responsibilities over him." Commissioner Harris agreed an

invitation should have been issued but acknowledged the urgency of the situation and agreed the matter must be addressed by issuing a subpoena.

Following Commissioner comments, Chair Rubin moved to public comment. There were ten members of the public who commented on item 2d.

On the motion of Commissioner Bonner, seconded by Commissioner Kennedy, the motion requests “that the full Commission authorize the issuance of a subpoena to Sheriff Villanueva to personally appear at the next regular meeting of the Civilian Oversight Commission to answer questions that are raised by the Memorandum of Commissioner Kennedy” and further recommended that the subpoena be issued pursuant to the Commission’s subpoena authority under Measure R.

Chair Rubin suggested a friendly amendment to authorize delaying issuance of the subpoena and discuss how to proceed. Commissioner Bonner rejected the friendly amendment and was prepared to move forward.

On a 7 – 1 vote, the motion passed.

### **3. REMARKS & REPORTS**

#### **3a. Executive Director’s Report**

Due to time constraints this item was not discussed.

#### **3a. Inspector General’s Report**

Due to time constraints, the [Report Back on Protecting Surviving Families from Law Enforcement Harassment and Retaliation \(July 7, 2021\)](#) was not discussed.

#### **3c. Commissioner Comments/[Ad Hoc Committee](#) Update**

Due to time constraints this item was not discussed.

#### **3d. Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department Update**

Due to time constraints this item was not discussed.

### **4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

View the written public comments for the July 15, 2021 meeting.

### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Rubin announced the next COC meeting to be determined. The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.