

# CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

# INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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<b>TO:</b>	Board of Charles County Commissioners
<b>FROM:</b>	Charles County Police Accountability Board
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	2025 Police Accountability Board Annual Report
<b>DATE:</b>	December 29, 2025

The Police Accountability Act of 2021, codified at Maryland Annotated Code, Public Safety Article, Title 3, Subtitle 1 (the "Act") mandates that each Maryland county establish a Police Accountability Board ("PAB") as the civilian public body charged with meeting with heads of law enforcement agencies, and to otherwise work with law enforcement agencies and county government to improve matters of policing. The Act also requires the creation of an Administrative Charging Committee ("ACC") in each county to recommend charges and discipline, when applicable, following review of the agency's internal investigation in response to complaints police misconduct involving members of the public.

The Charles County Police Accountability Board (the "PAB") submits this annual report for CY2025 to the Board of Charles County Commissioners. Pursuant to 3-102(a) of the Act, the PAB must submit a report by December 31 of each year that includes any trends in the disciplinary process of police officers in the county, and recommendations on changes to policy that would improve police accountability in the county. In addition, this report summarizes the activities of the PAB and the disciplinary matters considered by the ACC for 2025.

## Meetings and Membership

During the reporting period, quarterly meetings of the PAB were convened on January 30, 2025; April 24, 2025; July 24, 2025; and October 23, 2025, as required by the Act. Representatives of the Charles County Sheriff's Office ("CCSO") attended each quarterly meeting. Representatives of the La Plata Police Department ("LPPD") attended meetings held July 24, 2025, and October 23, 2025. Each quarterly meeting was held in the County Government Building in La Plata, Maryland, and was accessible virtually to meeting participants and the public using Microsoft Teams. The PAB held an additional meeting jointly with the ACC on November 19, 2025, to discuss the contents of the 2025 annual report.

In accordance with Charles County Resolution #2021-23, the PAB is comprised of nine (9) members, with two (2) members from each commissioner district, and one (1) at large member. Member Esperita Garrison (District 2 Representative) and member Quantral Fletcher (At Large Representative) were sworn in January of 2025. The remaining members began service to the PAB in prior years, and are as follows: Granville Johnson, Chairperson (District 4 Representative); Derrick Terry, Vice Chairman (District 3 Representative); Tia Spencer-Blake (District 1 Representative); David Bird (District 1 Representative); Jamila Smith (District 2 Representative); Ivan Hill (District 3 Representative); and Marcus Taylor (District 4 Representative). As of December 31, 2025, there are no vacancies on the PAB.

The ACC met once per month during the reporting period, except for January, to review and decide on cases of alleged police misconduct. In accordance with the Act, five (5) civilian members serve on the ACC. The PAB and County Commissioners are each responsible for the appointment of two (2) members, and the fifth member is the PAB chair or their designee. The County Commissioners established either 3-year or 4-year terms for each ACC member with the passage of Charles County Resolution #2023-01. Of the inaugural ACC membership, two (2) members terms expired as of December 31, 2025, and both were reappointed for an additional 4-year term. As of December 31, 2025, membership of the ACC is as follows: Guy Black, Chairperson; Warren Leggett, Vice Chairperson; Donald Poole; Tia Spencer-Blake, (PAB designee); and Alex Turner. The PAB is appreciative of the commitment shown by each of the ACC members, and the willingness of Mr. Turner and Mr. Poole to serve a second term.

### *Education and Training*

In accordance with the Act, ACC members must complete a 40-hour training on matters related to police procedures conducted by the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions (“MPCTC”) before they may participate on the committee. Our ACC members completed the training in 2022. The training spans five (5) consecutive days in person, and absence from any portion of the training is not permitted. As our inaugural members’ original terms expire, we must be resolute in determining if reappointment is desired. Otherwise, it will be critically important to identify new members when needed and coordinate their required training with the MPCTC to prevent any delay in the work of the ACC due to member turnover. The MPCTC offers the training twice annually, so it is imperative we timely register new ACC members.

While not mandatory, the MPCTC offers a 1-day optional training for PAB members and staff. This training provides an overview of the functions of the Act, the Uniform State Disciplinary Matrix (“Matrix”), and the roles responsibilities of the PAB, ACC, and Trial Board members. PAB staff previously attended the training. Unfortunately, the training is only offered at MPCTC headquarters in Sykesville, MD, which proved to be a challenge for our PAB membership interested in participating this reporting period. The PAB members will consider attending the training in the future, should agreeable dates and locations become available.

Two PAB members attended a pre-summit meeting hosted by the Baltimore City PAB. This pre-summit focused on the potential for effective collaboration amongst PABs across the State. The expectation is for Baltimore City PAB to host a series of inter-county summits in 2026 with PAB and ACC members from around the State to align and coordinate law, policy, issues and resources to assist with civilian oversight of law enforcement agencies. The summits are funded by the 2025 Police Accountability, Community, and Transparency Grant from the Governor’s Office awarded to the Baltimore City PAB.

### *Technology Considerations*

The County’s Information Technology staff provided five (5) County laptops to ACC members for their use in reviewing investigative files during the reporting period. The PAB advocated for use of County-issued devices for the ACC in order to provide additional security and prevent the degradation of personal devices. The County now has the ability to manage access controls, anti-malware protection, and other security measures. Previously, ACC members accessed files on their personal devices, which the PAB contended was not ideal for their devices or maintaining sensitive documents. The PAB is

appreciative for the work of County IT staff in resolving this matter and providing the much-needed equipment and software to the ACC.

As of July 1, 2025, all law enforcement agencies in the State were required to have body worn cameras (“BWC”), with certain exceptions. In CY2024, the PAB reported reoccurring technical issues with in-car video and BWC footage included with investigative files transmitted to the ACC. The cause of the problem varied, to include the officer forgetting to activate the device, devices being inoperable during the officer’s shift (dead batteries, etc.) or technical problems with footage not visible or not audible. To help remedy part of the issue, CCSO provided accounts to the ACC through their BWC software subscription during the reporting period. This allows the ACC to access videos directly from the website, which has improved some technical problems, since the videos no longer need to be transmitted from CCSO. The frequency of the problems with footage was reduced in CY2025, but not eliminated. We are hopeful that with ongoing administrative diligence and officer training, any video footage that should exist will exist and be accessible to the ACC when making determinations about complaints of police misconduct.

#### Complaint Data

One (1) complaint of police misconduct was submitted directly to the PAB during the reporting period. All other complaints were filed with the employing law enforcement agency. In total, the ACC received 51 complaints that included 142 alleged violations of police misconduct as of December 31, 2025. A variety of complaints were alleged, with the most frequently complained of violations being General Duties and Policies and Performance of Duty. Of the 142 alleged violations, 8 violations involved traffic collisions.

Of the 142 alleged violations contained in 51 cases, the ACC recommended administrative charges against the law enforcement officer for 22 violations. That included 11 sustained violations from CCSO and 3 sustained violations from LPPD. An additional 8 sustained violations for CCSO resulted from traffic collision cases. The officer was deemed exonerated or the violations alleged were deemed unfounded in the remaining 120 alleged violations. Twelve (12) complaints alleged excessive use of force against CCSO officers, and 1 case alleged excessive use of force against an LPPD officer. No complaints of excessive force were sustained by the ACC. Eleven (11) complaints contained alleged bias against CCSO, and 6 complaints of alleged bias were lodged against LPPD. No complaints of bias were sustained by the ACC. On average, the ACC considered 1-7 cases of police misconduct per month, which is slightly lower than the last reporting period. In CY2025, the ACC reached a determination to administratively charge or not to charge the law enforcement officer in approximately 16 days from receipt of CCSO cases, and approximately 14 days from receipt of LPPD cases, which is the same last year’s average for CCSO, and quicker than last year’s average for LPPD of 20 days. On average, CCSO transmitted cases to the ACC within 180 days of receipt of the complaint, and LPPD took approximately 234 days on average to transmit cases. This is higher than last year’s average for both agencies.

The PAB restates its appreciation for the CCSO Office of Professional Responsibility’s spreadsheet that contains the status of complaints of police misconduct that are subject to ACC review. These cases may still be undergoing agency review, in the investigation stage, or have been submitted to the ACC and are awaiting ACC disposition. The PAB appreciates receiving this report and finds it useful in allowing the PAB to glean the nature of complaints and the workload expected in the coming weeks or months for the ACC. A similar spreadsheet from LPPD would be helpful.

Similar to last year, the PAB restates its concern about complaints that the agencies do not deem to be within the purview of the ACC. These are cases that the agency determines are not one of "a pattern, a practice, or conduct by a police officer or law enforcement agency that includes: (1) depriving persons of rights protected by the constitution or laws of the State or the United States; (2) a violation of a criminal statute; and (3) a violation of law enforcement agency standards and policies." Pub. Safety §3-101(g). We recognize that many incidents allege violations that are clearly within the officer's official law enforcement capacity, however, in less explicit scenarios, inconsistencies as to when and when not to transmit cases to the ACC may arise. The PAB remains concerned about ensuring accountability and transparency related to the entirety of complaints against officers being investigated by their respective agencies. If an officer is alleged to have (1) deprived persons of rights protected by the constitution or laws of the State or the United States; (2) violated a criminal statute; or (3) violated a law enforcement agency standards and policies, and the incident involved a member of the public, then the PAB is of the opinion that the case should have some level of ACC involvement. There is nothing in the Act that limits these complaints of alleged violations to instances when an officer is acting within the scope of their official duties.

Year(As of Nov. 19, 2025)	Agency	Total Cases Received by ACC	Total Violations Reviewed by ACC	Days to Send to ACC (Total=Avg.)	ACC Days Until Adjudication (Total=Avg.)	Total Days to Process Cases to Disposition (Total=Avg.)	Years of Experience	Unfounded/Exonerated Violations	Sustained Violations
2023CCSO		44	98	139	22.8	164.9	9.1	75	23
LPD		8	19	103	26.1	161.2	4.1	16	3
CCSO Accidents		24	WNT	WNT	WNT	WNT	WNT	WNT	WNT
Totals		76	117	121	24.45	163.05	6.6	91	26
2024CCSO		33	113	146	16	179.8	9.8	96	16
LPD		9	18	108	19.9	29	7.7	9	7
CCSO Accidents		17	17		70		7	0	17
Totals		59	148	127	35.3	104.4	8.16666667	105	40
2025CCSO		30	112	179.68	16.3	214.3	8.8	101	11
LPD		13	22	234	13.7	296.9	9.77	19	3
CCSO Accidents		8	8	43.6	26.6	36	11	0	8
Totals		51	142	152.426667	18.8666667	182.4	9.85666667	120	22

### Vehicle Collisions/Traffic Accidents

As discussed in the CY2023 and CY2024 Annual Report, the ACC continues to receive cases of vehicle collisions. The PAB raised concerns in the last report about the transmittal of these cases to the ACC, where it appeared to be undisputed that the officer, during the course of operating their employer-issued vehicle, was involved in a vehicular accident. No complaint of misconduct by a member of public was actually filed to our knowledge in these cases. In CY 2024, CCSO streamlined the review process for the ACC by creating a standardized cover sheet titled Collision Committee Report. The cover sheet reduces the amount of time the ACC spends on vehicle collision cases, however, the PAB continues to advocate for the elimination of ACC review of this type of case. We continue to have one agency that transmits vehicle collision cases to the ACC, and a second agency that does not, which we believe undermines efforts to understand data and trends in police misconduct more broadly.

The PAB acknowledges that due to the problematic definition of “Police Misconduct” contained in the Act, and the inclusion of vehicle collisions in the Matrix, agencies are risking a possible violation of the Act should they choose not to transmit vehicle collisions to the ACC. We requested support from the Board of Charles County Commissioners for a state legislative proposal to make ineligible these types of “complaints” of police misconduct from ACC review. That legislative proposal was supported by the Commissioners, but was ultimately unsuccessful during the 2025 General Assembly session.

#### Trial Boards

The Act provides that if an officer declines discipline as recommended by the ACC pursuant to administrative charges, or higher discipline, as may be offered by the chief of the agency, the officer may request a trial board. The trial board consists of 3 members who have each completed trial board training provided by the MPCTC. The chair of the trial board must be actively serving or retired administrative law judge or the retired judge of the District Court or a circuit court. The appointment of the chair is the responsibility of the chief executive officer of the county. An officer of equal rank must be appointed by the head of the law enforcement agency to serve on the trial board. Lastly, a civilian member, who is appointed by the PAB, must serve. Currently, there are 2 Charles County residents properly trained to participate as the civilian members on trial boards. The PAB intends to identify additional citizens to participate on trial boards this upcoming year to ensure optimal availability for our agencies when fulfilling trial board requests made by officers.

During the reporting period, 3 trial boards were held in Charles County. Two (2) trial boards were requested by CCSO officers, and 1 trial board was at the request of an LPPD officer. The first trial board held this reporting period concerned 5 sustained administrative charges by the ACC against a CCSO officer. The charges stemmed from driving while intoxicated. The trial board determined that some charges merged, and ultimately sustained the violations for 2 charges and recommended officer termination from employment consistent with the Matrix. The second trial board concerned 2 sustained administrative charges by the ACC against an LPPD officer. The charges involved making false statements and failing to utilize the BWC. The trial board determined that charge #1 was not sustained because the agency failed to prove the officer’s intent to deceive when giving a false statement, and sustained the remaining charge related to the BWC, with a recommendation of 1 day loss of pay consistent with the Matrix. In trial board #3, the ACC sustained 5 charges against the CCSO officer stemming from failing to properly investigate a missing person case and mishandling personal property. The officer admitted to 3 charges. Ultimately, the trial board sustained violations for all 5 charges, and recommended a total of 13 days loss of pay and a letter of reprimand consistent with the Matrix.

#### Financial Considerations

The Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention recently approved a second round of funding to study the impact of the Act. The research is being conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum (“PERF”) and will focus, to an extent, on understanding the cost of compliance. Staff provided the information below to the PERF on the financial impact of the Act on the county. Please note 1. there may be additional costs of compliance with the Act that is borne by the agencies in Charles County but not be Charles County Government explicitly, and therefore not reflected here; and 2. administrative support to the PAB and ACC, and legal counsel to the PAB has been absorbed by existing staff, without added compensation.

- ACC Stipends \$14,400/year
- PAB Stipends \$15,425/year
- ACC computers
  - HP ProBook 460 Laptops - \$5,538.70 (one time)
  - 5 x Okta Licenses - \$144.20 (annual)
  - 5 x Endpoint Central Licenses - \$27.05 (annual)
  - 5 x TecMFA Licenses - \$44.70 (annual)
- Payments to Trial Board Chairman: \$8,558.19 to-date
- Payments to Civilian Member: \$187.50/trial board
- Payments to Legal Counsel for ACC: \$21,479.25 to-date
- Mileage reimbursement for MPCTC training: \$295.14 to-date

Recommendations

- County to advocate for a State legislative amendment to the Act to allow officers to file complaints of police misconduct with the PAB in addition to the agency. This may aid in an officer's willingness to bring a complaint.
- County to advocate for State legislation to expunge a complaint of police misconduct from the personnel file of the officer should they be exonerated in the matter.
- Comprehensive audit by the law enforcement agencies of BWC and other video footage abnormalities. This should include consideration of changes to pre-shift checklists, preventative maintenance protocols, and officer trainings.
- PAB to request attendance of the LPPD Chief and CCSO Sheriff at the PAB meeting, rather than representatives, at least once annually, and ensure both agencies are represented at each quarterly meeting as mandated by the Act.
- County to advocate for a State legislative amendment to clarify that vehicle collisions involving an officer, absent willful neglect, personal injury, driving while under the influence, or complaints submitted by members of the public, are not eligible for ACC review.
- County to advocate for a State legislative amendment to amend Md. Public Safety Code Ann. § 3-106(a)(h) to allow the trial board process to be established by the ACC, and to allow the trial board case to be brought on behalf of the ACC.
- County to request a State legislative amendment to amend Md. Public Safety Code Ann. § 3-105 to include clear language that prohibits inclusion of the position of the chief of the law enforcement agency in the offer of discipline and limits the ability to communicate a recommendation of the agency until such time as the officer has declined the offer of discipline from the ACC.
- Agencies to provide PAB with complete report of misconduct investigations as part of the quarterly roundtable meeting to help inform the PAB as to trends in the disciplinary process of police officers in the county.