

Policy Briefing Summary

City Council



Regarding:	Ordinance amending City Code Article XVI. - Police Civilian Oversight Board (1 of 2 readings)
Staff Contact(s):	James Walker, PCOB Management Analyst
Presenter:	James Walker, PCOB Management Analyst
Date of Proposed Action:	November 3, 2025

Issue

Council is asked to consider amendments to *Chapter 2 - Article XVI* of the City Code governing the Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB). The proposed ordinance amendments are intended to improve operational functionality, clarify roles and responsibilities, establish an Office of Police Civilian Oversight, and align oversight functions with city policies and state law.

Background / Rule

The stated purpose of the PCOB is to "establish and maintain trust between and among the Charlottesville Police Department (CPD), the City Council, the City Manager, and the public." The original ordinance was intended to authorize a fully independent, investigatory-dominant model of oversight. Since adoption, the application of this model has been hindered by structural inconsistencies, conflicting provisions, and procedural burdens that limit the Board's effectiveness and legitimacy. Critical gaps include unclear delineation between Board and Director responsibilities, misalignment with state law and CPD policies (including general orders and collective bargaining), conflicts with city procurement and operational procedures, and unrealistic expectations placed on volunteer Board members.

The amendments proposed address some of these deficiencies without altering the Board's core authority. These amendments align aspects of the ordinance with established city policies, state law, and current practices, while formalizing the Office of Police Civilian Oversight to improve the capacity and sustainability of oversight functions. The amendments help to clarify the distinct roles of the Director and the Board and streamline procedural requirements to reflect realistic expectations of Board members.

Analysis

The proposed amendments represent the first phase of ordinance reform focused on operational functionality and structural clarity. These changes do not alter the Board's powers or duties but rather address how those duties are implemented and by whom. The following links can be used to review the relevant amendments and supporting documents:

- [Current PCOB Ordinance \(Last Amended 11/18/2024\)](#)
- [PCOB Ordinance Amendments \(Redlined\)](#)
- [PCOB Ordinance Amendments \(Clean Rewrite\)](#)
- [Presentation of PCOB Ordinance Amendments \(Joint Council & PCOB Meeting 09/11/2025\)](#)

Establishing the Office and Clarifying Roles: The amendments formally establish the Office of Police Civilian Oversight (modeled on language from the Office of Human Rights ordinance) and delineate responsibilities between the Board, Director, and City Manager. Key changes include:

- Granting the Director authority to engage in oversight activities (policy review, departmental meetings, interview panels, use-of-force review) independently, or directed by Board majority vote, with summary reporting required.
- Authorizing the Director to conduct audits independently or at Board request.
- Shifting contract authority for legal counsel from the Board Chair to the Director, aligning with city procurement policies.
- Clarifying that the Director prepares the annual report, with Board review and approval.

Terminology and Organizational Improvements: The ordinance is updated throughout to replace "Executive Director" with "Director" for consistency with city organizational structure and to refer to the "Office of Police Civilian Oversight" uniformly. Multiple sections are reordered and consolidated (e.g., combining mediation and informal resolution; elevating subpoena and investigation conduct sections) to improve navigability and reduce fragmentation and redundancy. Some ordinance language has been removed entirely due to irrelevancy or duplication.

Aligning with Current Practice and Law: Several provisions are amended to reflect how oversight functions locally in practice and to reduce conflicts with state law, CPD policy, and collective bargaining agreements. Changes include:

- Updating language to reflect how information access is administered by the Director.
- Removing language directing Circuit Court actions (outside city ordinance authority).
- Clarifying confidentiality provisions and identifying the Chief of Police and City Attorney as sources for determinations on confidential information.
- Streamlining training requirements by reducing prescriptive timelines that create inefficiency with staggered appointments.

Supporting Volunteer Sustainability: The amendments reduce procedural burdens on volunteer Board members by shifting operational and administrative responsibilities to professional staff where appropriate, converting mandatory "shall" requirements to discretionary "may" options for certain community engagement activities and training mandates, and removing the fixed April 15 annual report deadline (aligning with other city boards and commissions).

These amendments balance the Council's oversight objectives with the operational realities of a part-time volunteer Board supported by a small, professionally staffed office.

Financial Impact

There is no anticipated financial impact from these amendments. The amendments assume a level budget for two full-time equivalent staff and operational expenses, as is currently allocated.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council should adopt the ordinance amendments to Article XVI of the City Code governing the Police Civilian Oversight Board, as presented.

Recommended Motion (if Applicable)

Council moves to approve adoption of the ordinance amendments to Article XVI of the City Code governing the Police Civilian Oversight Board, as presented.

Attachments

1. Article XVI PCOB Ordinance Amendments - Clean Version
2. Article XVI PCOB Ordinance Amendments - Redlined Version