

May 3, 2023

Dear City Council,

I write this rooted in my perspective as a former Co-Chair of Boulder's Police Oversight Panel, one of the two panelists to serve a complete term, and as a woman of color. I would like to share my thoughts regarding the upcoming vote on Council's removal of a panelist, and the particular circumstances surrounding Lisa Sweeney-Miran's potential removal. I acknowledge that this is entirely my own opinion, and that I'm aware there are many informed (and uninformed opinions) from the community on this matter. I appreciate the opportunity to share mine.

- 1. First, this is an incredibly messy and complicated situation. It involves not only Ms. Sweeney-Miran being part of a lawsuit to sue the city, but tweets that were shared in her personal capacity. It also involves the language of Ordinance 8430, and the interpretation of the language of Ordinance 8430. Finally, it involves the Selection Committee of the Police Oversight Panel, and their application, and decision-making process. This situation is layered and nuanced. It demands precise attention to detail and needs to be treated with care. Parts of it are confusing to me and I was serving as the Co-Chair of the Panel for the time period at issue. I am concerned that I have seen members of the public, city council, and now a Special Counsel weigh in without full consideration of the facts. I was struck most when reading the Special Counsel's report by the lack of robustness, nuance, and equity when completing this report. It read like selective interviewing of relevant parties, incomplete fact gathering, and a lack of thorough understanding of the situation at hand. I believe that if the City Council were to make any decision off this report alone on the future of a panelist, it would be a mistake.**
- 2. Ms. Sweeney-Miran's presence is causing harm to the Panel, but it doesn't mean the request by which she is being asked to resign is fair or equitable. Both can be true at the same time. I do not want City Council to set a poor precedent – one of overreaching and interfering with the panel's work because of community complaints. However, the Boulder Police Oversight Panel is primarily composed of diverse people who are volunteering their time and energy to provide oversight. It is (to my knowledge) the most diverse of any board and commissions in Boulder. The focus should squarely be on that population. The situation involving Ms. Sweeney-Miran is distracting from the core work of the Panel, and it is asking a lot of volunteers to become enmeshed in this situation.**
- 3. I worry that this conflict could spell the end of the Panel, which I think despite enormous controversy and difficulties, have made major accomplishments in oversight – and designing a structure for what community oversight looks like from the ground up. The Panel is not only currently reviewing cases, but it is undergoing hours of training to make sure they are fit panelists. The Panel is actively involved with the ordinance redrafting. That is enough work. This is a group of people who have established relationships with Chief Herold and Deputy Chief Redfearn in which difficulties are treated with concern, and respect. There is an ability to engage in difficult conversations with police leadership in a civil manner. This is a group that has spent countless hours drafting their by-laws, and ensuring that the Panel was held accountable, knows its power and knows its limits. Every single case review I sat in on during my tenure, was conducted with**

**time, care, and respect for all those involved. Panelists showed up prepared, asked measured questions, and gently challenged one another on disagreements. I hope that this conflict doesn't make us forget that the core of the Panel's work is good work; that having diverse civilians actively involved with their policing and public service, and what it looks like is a good thing. Do not let the politics surrounding this situation distract from that. If we, the Police Oversight Panel, are going to be judged by the actions of other panelists, allow us to choose who those panelists are. And I would ask that you judge us by Martha Wilson's empathy, Taishya Adams' fierceness, Daniel Leonard's diligence, and Hadasa Villalobos' grace.**

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ariel Amaru

Former Co-Chair of the Boulder Police Oversight Panel