



Militarized Equipment Ad Hoc Meeting Minutes (9/16/25)

Meeting Minutes

Time: 6:35 PM - 7:34 PM

Attendees

- **Commissioner Wilson Riles (Chair)**
 - **Commissioner Omar Farmer**
 - **Commissioner Dawit (joined later)**
 - **John Lindsay-Poland (Community Member)**
 - **Tuan Ngo (Community Member)**
 - **Captain Eriberto Perez (OPD)**
 - **Acting Lt. Patrick Gonzales (OPD)**
 - **Lt. Omar Daza-Quiroz (OPD)**
 - **Other community participants**
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Main Topics Discussed

1. **Finalization of 2024 Militarized Equipment Report**
 - Committee preparing a final draft report for the October 9th Police Commission meeting.

- Chair Riles will incorporate Commissioner and community feedback into the final version.

2. Bearcat Vehicle Replacement

- Ongoing disagreement about approving or replacing the Bearcat.
- Majority of Commissioners leaning toward *not* approving a replacement Bearcat at this time.
- OPD emphasized the Bearcat is over 20 years old but still functional.

3. Assault Rifle Replacement Plan

- OPD intends to replace 70 aging rifles with new models through LC Action, an approved vendor.
- Concerns raised about LC Action's past ATF violations; OPD will verify and follow up.
- Current quoted cost: \$217,637 (includes \$27,300 credit for trade-in of old rifles).

4. Community Safety Concerns

- Ongoing robberies of jewelry stores and sideshows raised by community members.
- Discussion about whether OPD has sufficient equipment and staffing to handle such emergencies.
- Broader concerns about staffing shortages, crime clearance rates, and community trust in OPD.

5. Data and Statistics

- Debate over OPD clearance rates: Chair Riles cited CA DOJ data showing low rates (0.1% property crimes to ~50% homicide).
- OPD disputed numbers, stating internal statistics differ and crime is trending downward overall.

Questions and Concerns Raised

- **Commissioner/Community Concerns:**

- Why is LC Action being considered if they may have ATF violations?
 - How will the Bearcat issue be clearly documented in the report?
 - Are replacement rifles sufficient given staffing shortages?
 - Clearance rates and crime trends—conflicting data between OPD and DOJ.
 - Community distrust of OPD and its impact on crime reporting and clearance.
 - **Community Member (Tuan Ngo):**
 - Worried about lack of equipment in emergencies (e.g., school shootings, sideshows).
 - Concerned OPD is understaffed and under-equipped, forcing civilians to arm themselves.
 - Frustrated with policies limiting pursuits for property crimes, which hinder crime deterrence.
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Suggestions and Recommendations

- Chair Riles:
 - Final draft will include community and commissioner input, plus references.
 - Report will recommend disapproval of Bearcat replacement, while leaving open possibility of exploring other vehicles.
 - Captain Perez:
 - Emphasized importance of proper training for officers receiving new rifles.
 - Requested a copy of the final ad hoc letter for Chief Mitchell's review prior to the Commission meeting.
 - John Lindsay-Poland:
 - Urged focus on equipment and compliance with ordinance/state law, not broader public safety debates.
 - Shared DOJ clearance rate data for transparency.
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Next Steps

1. Chair Riles to circulate **final draft report and letter** within the next few days.
 2. Finalized document to be submitted to the **October 9th Commission Meeting**.
 3. OPD to:
 - Verify vendor compliance with procurement ordinance.
 - Provide Chief with final version of ad hoc report/letter.
 4. Community members encouraged to raise concerns directly at the **October 9th Commission meeting**.
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Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned

Chat Transcript

00:21:06 Tuan NGo: I have some comments and concerns regarding certain claims in the draft put forth and have attached an alternate draft:

“Militarized equipment is an excessive force issue. There’s no evidence it makes the city safer.”

- Violent crime in Oakland is at crisis levels; residents and businesses need real protection, not theories. - Equipment doesn’t replace community trust, but it does prevent officers and civilians from being killed when violence occurs.

- “No evidence” is misleading: nationwide, armored rescue vehicles and modern rifles are routinely credited with saving lives in hostage rescues, active shooter incidents, and natural disasters.

00:21:27 Tuan NGo: “The BearCat was misused in the Pawlik incident, which cost taxpayer money.”

- The Pawlik case was a failure of decision-making and training, not a failure of the equipment itself.

- Removing equipment because of one misuse is like banning fire trucks because of a single accident.

- Stronger policy, oversight, and training are the solutions—not depriving the city of protective tools.

“Armored Vehicle Training Bulletin must be re-reviewed; OPD has a misconduct history.”

- Regular reviews are appropriate, but they should not delay or block necessary replacements.

- Outdated and unsafe vehicles increase the risk of another tragedy—equipment upgrades reduce those risks.

- A modern BearCat with clear policies is safer for both officers and residents than leaving officers exposed.

00:24:07 Tuan NGo: “OPD wants 75 new rifles at high cost during a fiscal crisis, despite lower gun violence.”

- Rifle replacement is about safety and functionality: current rifles are decades old and increasingly unsafe.

- A single officer injury, lawsuit, or failed response costs the city more than the price of new rifles.

- Even with some declines in gun violence, robberies, armed carjackings, and home invasions remain at crisis levels.

“Militarized equipment is disproportionately used in Black and Brown communities, triggering trauma.”

00:24:34 Tuan NGo: The equipment is deployed where crime is most concentrated—not based on race, but on emergency calls.

- Residents in these neighborhoods are often the strongest voices asking for more protection, not less.

- Trauma comes from being victimized by crime; failing to protect vulnerable communities only compounds that trauma.

- Denying lifesaving tools to high-crime neighborhoods would be unequal and unfair.

“Council should reject BearCat replacement and decline additional rifles.”

- Rejecting replacements leaves officers and civilians unprotected in the most dangerous situations.

- Civilian SUVs are not substitutes for armored rescue vehicles—suggesting otherwise is reckless.

- Updated rifles and training are baseline requirements for safe, professional policing, not luxuries.

00:24:46 Tuan NGo: “Discussion of all militarized equipment should be ongoing, not just annual.”

- Regular discussion is fine, but tying up critical purchases in endless meetings delays lifesaving upgrades.

- Annual reports already meet legal standards under AB481; adding layers of review without timelines risks paralyzing public safety decisions.

00:25:01 Tuan NGo: Please refer to my 9/2/2025 email to this group for alternate letter proposed.

00:36:05 Tuan NGo: Please incorporate these brief bullet points into the meeting minutes. And also the alternate letter. Thank you.

00:40:20 John Lindsay-Poland:

<https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/exploration/crime-statistics/crimes-clearances>