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Year-End Report to the Board from Chair Ernest F. Hart, Esq.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the board and our very able staff for performing extraordinarily well in 2010 under a complex set of circumstances.

In this 2010 year-end report, I would like to highlight both the most notable trends and the areas in which the agency improved its performance. I would also like to mention aspects of our operations in which we need to do better.

The board received fewer cases in 2010: 6,476 cases, a 15 percent decrease over 2009 (or, 1,184 fewer cases). This is the lowest number of case filings since 2004 when 6,196 complaints were filed. The number of complaints within our jurisdiction filed directly with the CCRB and by phone decreased by more than 20 percent in the last year.

Although the board closed 13 percent fewer cases than in 2009, it closed more cases than it received: 7,041. The second half of the year had less activity: 3,151 cases were closed versus 3,890 closures in the first half (a 19 percent decrease). Among other factors, the three vacancies in the board could account for the downturn.

As a result, the agency reduced its open docket by 572 cases; a 17 percent reduction from 2009. Equally important, the number of cases in the open docket 16 months or older, as measured from date of incident, decreased 59 percent, from 73 to 30 cases. We will continue to work hard to reduce the agency's open docket. The board now has 1,046 cases pending board review (37 percent of the open docket), and reducing this number will be a priority for 2011.

The board reduced its truncation rate from 64.4% to 60.7%. Last year the board authorized the Executive Director to close "complaint withdrawn" cases and she closed 743 cases, or 10.6% of all closures.

The average time to complete a full investigation decreased by 14 percent, from 349 days in 2009 to 299 days in 2010. In the first half, the average time was 314 days; in the second half, the average time was 277 days. It is important that we, the board and the staff, continue to do everything we can to complete investigations in a timely way.

The length of time to complete a substantiated investigation also fell, from 373 days in 2009, to 357 days in 2010, a four percent reduction. As a result, the percentage of substantiated cases which were 15 months and older fell from 71 in 2009 (36 percent of all substantiated cases) to 45 in 2010 (17 percent of all substantiated cases). We only referred three cases to the Police Department that were 18 months and older in 2010. These are important performance indicators that we continually strive to improve.

In 2010, the number of mediated cases rose from 118 to 157, or 33 percent. The number of cases closed as mediation attempted increased from 86 to 184, or 114 percent. Mediation closures made up for 4.8 percent of all board closures, 2.3 percentage points higher than in 2009. We will continue to work towards increasing these numbers in 2011.

In addition, the mediation unit received 652 mediation referrals in 2010 compared with 424 in 2009. The percentage of officers who accepted the offer to mediate rose from 74 in 2009 to 82 percent in 2010. That's up from 68 percent in 2008. The acceptance rate for civilians also increased, from 50 percent in 2008 to 53 in 2009 and 56 percent in 2010. I want to thank the Executive Director – Joan Thompson - and the Director of Mediation – Lisa Cohen - for their leadership in this area and for the hard work of the staff in the mediation unit.

The Outreach Unit increased the number of outreach meetings from 49 in 2009 to 95 in 2010, a 94 percent increase. Equally important, these meetings target a more diverse audience than in the past. The board itself visited three boroughs and members of the board participated in many events. I would like to thank our Director of Community Relations – Dawn Fuentes – for her good work.

I would also like to thank our investigative staff for their excellent performance in 2010. As we all know, the number of front-line investigators has fallen in recent years as a result of reductions in our budget. In December of 2009, the CCRB had 123 active investigators (including supervisory and managerial staff). In December of 2010 the number was 109. In spite of this, investigators have reduced their docket by 520 cases, or 26 percent, and closed cases 18 percent faster. As a result, the number of cases pending investigation aged 13 months or older was just one percent of the docket. First Deputy Executive Director, Meera Joshi, Roger Smith, Laura Edidin, Cecilia Holloway, Dennis McCormick, Robert Rodriguez, Bob Lonergan, Winsome Thelwell and the entire staff in the Investigations Division deserve our thanks for this tremendous performance.

The success of the agency in 2010 is also due to the support staff: Deputy Executive Director for Administration Brian Connell, Director of MIS Yuriy Gregorev, Operations, Intake and the Case Management Unit, Personnel, General Counsel Graham Daw, Director of Strategic Initiatives Marcos Soler, Director of Case Management Denise Alvarez, and our new Director of Communications, Linda Sachs.