

## **MELANIE A. WHITE, J.D.**

### **Biography**

Melanie A. White currently serves as the Interim Secretary to the Board for the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC), where she has served as the Board's Administrator since December 2019. Throughout her career, Melanie has advocated for civil rights, criminal justice reform, and community-led oversight of law enforcement. For almost two (2) decades, Melanie has worked as an Investigator and Senior Investigator for this Board and the community, investigating and providing management regarding alleged police misconduct investigations and providing accountability to the community regarding law enforcement and civilian oversight, and later as a Policy Manager for the Board, evaluating and developing DPD policies. Melanie is committed to community-led civilian oversight and bridging the gap between the community and policing to ensure that civilian oversight is a permanent part of public safety. "The community must hold law enforcement agencies accountable and work with law enforcement and civilian oversight agencies to ensure that their concerns, viewpoints, and recommendations are considered and implemented," Melanie says. "It is also important for these entities to work together to prioritize and accomplish what is in the best interest of the community to ensure constitutional, legitimate, and safe policing."

The BOPC is vested with civilian oversight and supervisory control of the Detroit Police Department, which has about 2,500 sworn officers and 400 civilian employees. Approximately 35 administrative and investigative civilian professionals work for the Board, under the direction of the Chair and under the management of the Secretary. Melanie works closely with the Chairperson and Board Leadership to help the Board fulfill its charter-mandated roles, responsibilities, and day-to-day tasks. During the COVID-19 era, Melanie worked as Interim Board Secretary to create and develop administrative policies and procedures for the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Board. In her role, she represents the Board in meetings with the Chief of Police, Department Executives, governmental officials, and other community stakeholders including residents, community and civic organizations, and other external stakeholders. She has been credited with being one of the best Board Administrators the BOPC has had in representing the Board and working with the local police department. She is lauded for her focus, willingness to work with diverse groups, and her ability to bring dynamic groups together for the greater goal of legitimate policing, public safety, effective civilian oversight, and a more peaceful, prosperous society.

During the DOJ Consent Decree, Melanie, along with other key administrators, helped the Board avoid a \$1K per day fine by developing a training curriculum for new and existing OCI Investigators, eliminating the case backlog of over 1,300-1,500 cases, among other responsibilities. With this experience and with visionary thinking, Melanie and her colleagues have refocused and re-aligned the organization with NACOLE's best practices and 21st Century Civilian Oversight.

During the George Floyd era, Melanie worked closely with the Board, the Department, and the community to enhance the Detroit Police Department's Use of Force Policy to ban carotid chokeholds, mandate quarterly updates to the Board on Use of Force, and include a duty to intervene among other key policies. During the COVID-19 era, Melanie and the BOPC

Administrative Staff, under the Board's Leadership was instrumental in ensuring the Board met its charter mandates, Board Bylaws, and Open Meetings Act (OMA) requirements through the implementation of Zoom technology platform and protocols and resumed the Board's weekly meetings within two weeks of the global public health crisis announcement, ensuring continued access to the Board and the Department, and transparency and accountability to the community. Melanie and her administrative staff developed key training programs for BOPC Board members that included best practices in civilian oversight, law enforcement, Board governance, and parliamentary procedures, among other key programs for strengthening civilian oversight and public safety. Melanie's nomination for the NACOLE Board was also endorsed by the BOPC, which recognized Melanie's leadership skills, experience, and work with NACOLE.

Melanie is a strong supporter of NACOLE and has served on several committees, including NACOLE's 25th Anniversary Conference Planning Committee and the Membership Committee. Melanie has also co-lead and moderated several training sessions during past NACOLE Conferences, including the "Detroit Evolution" at the 25th Annual Conference in Detroit, Michigan. Melanie currently serves on NACOLE's Membership Committee helping to develop key membership initiatives to recruit, retain, and reactivate NACOLE members.

Born and raised in Detroit, Melanie holds a Juris Doctorate Degree from Western Michigan University Cooley Law School, a Master of Public Administration Degree from Wayne State University, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Norfolk State University in Norfolk, Virginia. Melanie is also a certified professional mediator with the National Association of Certified Mediators. She is also a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians. Melanie has always been active in her community in many different areas, including Social Justice and Civil Rights. A member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. for over 20 years, Melanie currently serves as the Connection and Social Action Committee Chairperson in her local chapter Alpha Rho Omega Chapter, helping to lead, empower, advocate, and help the community make educated decisions on those social issues that impact our quality of life. Melanie also leads her committee in promoting social equity and fairness in all endeavors, including educating the community on voting rights, voter registration, and voter mobilization, and much more. She is also a musician and trombonist, bringing her unique, dynamic experience from working with musicians such as Gladys Knight, Marcus Belgrave, and other prominent musicians, to the field of civilian oversight in bringing all stakeholders together for the greater good.