

December 18, 2013

President Ken Sanchez
Albuquerque City Council:

Your Police Oversight Task Force writes this letter asking for your urgent assistance. We are entering the final weeks of our work to provide the City Council with our recommendations regarding ways to improve the City's mechanisms of police oversight. As the current contract negotiations with the Albuquerque Police Officers Association (APOA) impact the work the Task Force is doing, we request that the members of the City Council individually ask Mayor Berry to immediately bifurcate the contract negotiations with the APOA. We believe the administration and the APOA can – and should – complete their negotiations and ratification of the financial package as soon as possible to provide salary increases and create an officer retention incentive program. In order for the work of the Task Force to be meaningful, ratification of the remainder of the contract should be stayed until after the Task Force has submitted our recommendations to the City Council for its consideration and a new Police Oversight Ordinance is in place. The Police Oversight Task Force is scheduled to complete its work for presentation to the City Council by the end of January 2014.

As you know, the contents of the contract negotiations between the administration and the APOA are not public. Some of the contract provisions will likely define aspects of the relationship among the Albuquerque Police Department, the Police Oversight Commission and the Independent Review Office. If the contract is ratified before the City Council receives the Task Force's recommendations, there will be no opportunity for the City's legislative body to hear and consider suggestions addressing those same relationships before they are defined by a new contract. In other words, the contract itself may shape the police oversight process without the public input the City Council had requested.

The Task Force requests that the individual members of the City Council immediately ask Mayor Berry to refrain from ratifying all but the financial portions of the APOA contract until the Task Force has submitted its set of recommendations to the City Council for its consideration and the City Council has passed a new Civilian Police Oversight Ordinance.

On behalf of the Police Oversight Task Force,



Andrew Lipman
Chairperson