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STATE OF MARYLAND
PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT COMPLIANCE BOARD

PIACB 22-11

April 15, 2022

Prince George's County Police Department, Custodian
Tracy Siska, Chicago Justice Project, Complainant

On September 9, 2021, the complainant, who is the Executive Director of the non-profit Chicago Justice Project (“CJP”), sent the Prince George’s County Police Department (“PGPD”) a ten-part Public Information Act (“PIA”) request seeking information about, and numerous records related to, databases that contain data about the gang affiliation of individuals. The complainant asked the PGPD to waive any fees associated with the request. When it acknowledged the request, the PGPD estimated that it would cost \$8,400 to respond, and required prepayment of the estimated fee. The complainant ultimately filed a complaint with this Board alleging both that the \$8,400 estimated fee charged by the PGPD is unreasonable, and that the PGPD denied his request for a fee waiver in error.

The PGPD initially responded that the fee is reasonable given the substantial number of records that the complainant seeks, and invited the CJP to narrow the scope of the request so that the fee might be reduced or eliminated altogether. Then, on April 1, 2022, the PGPD indicated that it intended to respond to the PIA request without charging a fee. Thus, given that there is no longer a *fee* dispute between the parties, we dismiss this complaint as moot. *Cf. Hammen v. Baltimore County Police Dep’t*, 373 Md. 440, 449 (2003) (explaining that a matter is “moot when there is no longer an existing controversy between the parties at the time it is before the court so that the court cannot provide an effective remedy,” (internal quotation and citations omitted)); *see also* Md. Code Ann., Gen. Provisions §§ 4-1A-04(a), 4-1A-05(a)(2) (Board’s current jurisdiction is limited to allegations of unreasonable fees higher than \$350).

Public Information Act Compliance Board

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