

NORTHAMPTON POLICING REVIEW COMMISSION

Organizational Meeting

MEETING AGENDA
Tuesday, September 22, 2020
6:00 PM-8:00 PM
Remote Meeting

Join the Remote Meeting:

- **Video Conference:**
<https://zoom.us/j/93818785354?pwd=ZTBWaUVzR1hwMTINS2I3aXZQNTNLZz09>
- **Or by telephone, call:** 1-929-436-2866, Meeting ID: 938 1878 5354, Passcode: 671459

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Court Cline, Assistant to Mayor Narkewicz at 6:08 PM. Some of the commissioners were having difficulty with the Zoom meeting link, so we waited for more commissioners to join us.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Ahrens	present
Commissioner Barajas-Roman	present
Commissioner Bush	present
Commissioner Cannity	present
Commissioner Fleisher	present
Commissioner Hoose	present
Commissioner Jarrett	present
Commissioner Lopez	present
Commissioner Luengo-Garrido	present
Commissioner Olivo	present
Commissioner Pole	present
Commissioner Quinlan	present
Commissioner Rosales	present
Commissioner Suopis	present
Commissioner Rivera-Gonzalez	present

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ZOOM RECORDING

Court made an announcement that this meeting was being recorded for the public record and would be available on Northampton Open Media, as well as, the City of Northampton website.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

The commissioners introduced themselves to each other and many of them talked about what led them to wanting to be a part of this commission.

3. ELECTION of CO-CHAIRS

The commissioners engaged in a lengthy discussion about the election of co-chairs.

Commissioner Barajas-Roman asked about a description of the responsibilities and expectations of the co-chairs.

Commissioner Fleisher added that the tasks before them are challenging with a lot of potential “rabbit holes” and complexities and suggested that the commission consider using a professional facilitator to help guide them to right questions, get everyone’s viewpoints and narrow it down to specific recommendations about how to think about the city’s budget for next year. It would cost money to hire someone to be a facilitator.

Commissioner Aherns wondered if the facilitator would take the place of the co-chairs and would the co-chairs have equal power.

Commissioner Fleisher offered that the professional facilitator would be in addition to the co-chairs that would provide the logistical support for the commission.

Commissioner Luengo-Garrido said that he disagreed with the idea of the professional facilitator, and that he felt that people of color should co-chair this committee—especially with the great amount of brain power that is assembled.

Commissioner Rivera-Gonzalez agreed with the idea of the commission being chaired by people of color but cautioned about “getting stuck in the details.” That we weren’t always going to be 100% right and that we would have to trust our guts and trust each other in this process.

Mayor Narkewicz offered that all multi-member bodies had similar structures that included a chair and vice-chair or co-chairs. The responsibilities and duties include setting an agenda, running the meetings, and other administrative tasks with the assistance of a hired staff person.

Commissioner Pole wondered who had experience in the running meetings on the commission and also had interest.

Commissioner Suopis stated that she has lots of experience but that is her experience is “influenced by privilege” and that she is a strong proponent of having the co-chairs be people of color.

Commissioner Hoose said that he is not campaigning for the job but that he had been the chair of the Hampden County Lawyers for Justice and co-chair to the Western Mass. Committee to End the Death Penalty, but he agrees with the previous commissioners that at least one if not both of the co-chairs should be people of color.

Commissioner Rivera-Gonzalez said that she thought that the person wouldn't necessarily have to be a person of color and that she wasn't interested in stepping into that role. She also cautioned that not every decision will be 100% right and that will have to be okay.

City Council President Sciarra offered some helpful information to the commission about Zoom meeting parameters and etiquette and suggested that the commissioners use the raised hand feature to speak going forward.

Commissioner Bush suggested that one of the biggest skills a chairperson of a group can have is the ability to listen more than talk. He also stated that he has been a chair and that his wife would not be happy if he volunteered to be the chair or co-chair of this group.

Commissioner Olivo said that she works in Residence Life at Smith College and has a lot of experience facilitating meetings and that she is willing to be a co-chair and is not a big talker.

Commissioner Cannity stated that he was interested in being a co-chair as long as it was just an administrative role involving facilitation. He was not interested in having more power than anyone else in this group.

Mayor Narkewicz clarified that multi-member bodies in the city make decisions as a group and have power as a group and not as individuals.

Commissioner Quinlan stated that as elected officials and representatives from the City Council on the commission that neither he nor Commissioner Jarrett could serve as the co-chairs.

Commissioner Lopez offered that she doesn't want to take on the role and that other responsibilities in her life would take away from a role as a co-chair.

Commissioner Ahrens asked if the commission agreed with the idea of two co-chairs and whether it was necessary to use Robert's Rules of Order to conduct the business of meetings.

Commissioner Fleisher said that there wasn't a lot of interest in his initial suggestion about a professional facilitator, but he felt like it was a fruitful discussion.

Commissioner Quinlan also asked about Robert's Rules of Order.

Mayor Narkewicz stated that they weren't a requirement but that they were an effective tool that many multi-member bodies used to conduct business.

Commissioner Rivera-Gonzalez said that we don't have a lot of time to take on such big tasks and that she trusts all of you.

City Council President Sciarra offered that the commissioners could nominate someone to be co-chair or nominate yourself. That it was perfectly fine to do so.

Commissioner Bush stated that he would like to call the question.

Commissioner Luengo-Garrido stated that he thought Commissioner Cannity should be a co-chair.

Commissioner Cannity asked if the structure should be two co-chairs or chair and vice-chair.

Mayor Narkewicz said that he thought co-chairs made the most sense because it is a large commission and that the co-chairs could share the load.

Commissioner Ahrens moved that Commissioner Olivo and Commissioner Cannity be co-chairs. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bush. A roll call vote was held and the motion carried unanimously.

Court asked if the commission co-chairs if they would like to facilitate the meeting from this point forward, and they declined.

4. PRESENTATION: OPEN MEETING LAW, CONFLICT OF INTEREST, AND PUBLIC RECORDS BY CITY SOLICITOR, ATTORNEY ALAN SEEWALD

City Solicitor Seewald offered a detailed presentation on the Open Meeting Law, conflict of interest, and public records. Attorney Seewald also answered questions about these topics from the commissioners.

Commissioner Suopis asked the City Solicitor about whether there was an obligation for public comment at every meeting. The City Solicitor stated that there was no legal obligation for public comment, but it had been a long-held tradition in our city meetings to allow it. He also thought that a commission like this one would want to allow it. He also cautioned the commissioners to make rules about it before it begins instead of trying to do it when public comment gets out of hand.

5. DISCUSSION: HIRING OF COMMISSION STAFF PERSON

The commissioners discussed the draft job posting that was prepared by the city's human resource (HR) department and sent to them prior to this meeting.

Commissioner Bush asked if the taking of minutes was included in the job description, and Mayor Narkewicz noted that this is listed as one of the duties of the staff person.

Commissioner Quinlan asked if there was any requirement to offer this position to someone who had been laid off from the city due to the pandemic. Mayor Narkewicz stated that there is no requirement. This is listed as a new, temporary, part-time position and would be a non-represented position that is advertised through the city's human resources portal.

Commissioner Ahrens asked about the number of hours, how much money would the staff person get paid, who does the hiring, and how will HR get the word out? Mayor Narkewicz said that the draft of the job description includes the salary band, the number of years of experience, and basic educational requirements. The Mayor also said that the co-chairs would be involved in the hiring process as it is facilitated through the HR department in the city. All postings through the HR portal are also cross posted through Indeed.com and LinkedIn.com. The City

Council appropriated \$25,000 at their last meeting for the administrative support of this commission. Additional funds could be requested through the Mayor and the City Council. The Mayor explained that he wanted to get a staff member on board as quickly as possible.

Commissioner Jarrett asked if the staff person could become a member of one of the unions representing other city workers. Mayor Narkewicz explained that the temporary, part time nature of this position would disqualify it from being part of any existing collective bargaining agreements.

Commissioner Cannity asked if this staff person could procure records from other city departments and offices. The Mayor responded that this would be a pretty common task for any staff person in the city government.

Commissioner Cannity also asked if the staff person would report to the HR Director. Mayor Narkewicz explained that the HR department would assist in the hiring with assistance from the co-chairs of the commission, and that postings typically close after two weeks. The staff person would work of the commission and would be supervised by the commission through the co-chairs.

Commissioner Cannity wondered about protections for this staff person from being overwhelmed by individual asks from all of the commissioners. The Mayor explained that the co-chairs would be the “protectors” of this staff person with this regard and that multi-member bodies typically make group requests and not individual requests.

Commissioner Fleisher suggested that the protections include that the staff person reports to the co-chairs and not the individual staff members.

Commissioner Luengo-Garrido wanted to note that this staff person would be asked to do a lot, with low pay, over the course of a nine-month, part-time position during a pandemic. Commissioner Luengo-Garrido had no solution ideas but wanted to note that information.

Commissioner Cannity thanked Mayor Narkewicz for making this hiring actionable and making changes to the job description to reflect the concerns raised in this discussion, but Commissioner Cannity wanted to make sure that everyone’s voice was heard in this discussion.

Commissioner Bush moved to accept the draft job description with the addition of making the staff person reportable to the co-chairs.

Commissioner Rosales agreed with Commissioner Bush and seconded the motion. The motion carried with all commissioners voting in the affirmative with the exception of Commissioner Luego-Garrido who abstained and Commissioner Rivera-Gonzalez did not vote.

6. SELECTION OF MEETING TIMES AND DATES

Commissioner Olivo wondered how often? Every week? Every other week?

Commissioner Suopis proposed every other week, Tuesday from 6-8:00 PM. Commissioner Rosales agreed that it works for most members.

Commissioner Cannity asked about the one commissioner that couldn't make it tonight. Court interjected that all of the commissioners were present for this meeting.

Commissioner Lopez wanted to note that the commission should be mindful of sticking to the time allotted, and it is important to be mindful of members that have small children or other commitments.

Commissioner Quinlan talked about the importance of public comment, and Commissioner Ahrens proposed having public comment before the commission begins to discuss their charge and "road map" for achieving their charge—perhaps an hour of public comment limited to three minutes per speaker?

Commissioner Luengo-Garrido agreed with Commissioner Ahrens and stated that public comment adds to the conversation and that it would be good to listen to the public again.

Commissioner Fleisher stated that there was a fair amount of public comment at the City Council meetings that led to the formation of this commission.

Court noted that the next meeting would be October 6th, but Commissioner Lopez stated that one of the meetings would fall on Election Day, November 3rd.

Commissioner Cannity suggested that they look at another day that week. Commissioner Jarrett proposed that they have two meetings in a row and then start every other week. Commissioner Lopez stated that the commission should meet next week and then begin every other week.

Commissioner Bush liked that idea and floated the idea of tabling the discussion of the charge and work plan to the next meeting.

Commissioner Suopis moved that there be a meeting next Tuesday and then begin meeting every other week. Commissioner Quinlan seconded. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Rivera-Gonzalez not voting and no longer being present.

7. DISCUSSION: NPRC CHARGE AND WORK PLAN FORMULATION

Commissioner Bush moved to table the discussion of this agenda item to the next meeting since this meeting was already going late. Commissioner Luengo-Garrido seconded. The motion carried with Commissioner Olivo being the only one to vote nay and Commissioner Rivera-Gonzalez not voting.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Bush moved that time for public comment limited to 15-30 minutes at the next meeting prior to the discussion of the work plan.

City Solicitor Seewald interjected that 15-30 minutes was not enough time and that it has typically been two hours at most meeting, but City Council did limit the time in the past.

City Council President Sciarra also noted that the City Council limited it to two hours after the entire council voted on it.

The City Solicitor suggested that an hour might be an acceptable compromise.

Council President Sciarra reminded the commission that they also have the requirement of three public hearings as part of their charge.

Commissioner Ahrens also stated that 15-30 minutes was too brief and that for a two-hour meeting, it was unreasonable to have two hours of comment. Commissioner Ahrens floated the idea of the meeting next week having an hour of public comment with speakers limited to 3 minutes a piece.

Commissioner Bush removed his motion.

Commissioner Hoose stated that the commission need ed to be respectful of peoples' time. The commission should stick to its meeting time and that the three public hearings would serve the purpose of public comment.

Commissioner Cannity moved that the next meeting be a three-hour meeting- with the first hour devoted to public comment and speakers limited to three minutes each. Commisisoner Luengo-Garrido seconded.

Commissioner Barajas-Roman stated that she thought that the work plan should be developed first and public comment should come afterwards as a response to the work plan. Commissioner Quinlan agreed that this could be a way to do it.

Commissioner Ahrens disagreed and thought that public comment needs to come before the road map is developed and should be limited to an hour with three minutes to each speaker.

Commissioner Luengo-Garrido agreed with Commissioner Ahrens on taking public comment before the work plan is written.

Commissioners Fleisher, Lopez, and Olivo agree with Commissioner Barajas-Roman on having the public comment after the work plan is developed.

Commisisoner Quinlan wondered if this public comment period would count as one of the three public hearings.

Commissioner Luengo-Garrido stated that the community knows what they want, what they think, and what they are asking for. Commissioner Luengo-Garrido disagrees with Commissioner Barajas-Roman.

Commissioner Jarrett wondered about a time change for the next meeting. There was a discussion amongst the commissioner. Commissioner Cannity proposed starting the meeting at 5:30 PM and ending at 8:30 PM. Commissioner Rosales agreed.

Commissioner Suopis asked whether this would be every meeting or just the next one. Commissioner Cannity clarified that it would just be this meeting.

Commissioner Ahrens reiterated the importance of public comment and that the work plan can be expanded on with public comment.

Commissioner Cannity restated his original motion to be that the next meeting would be a three-hour meeting from 5:30-8:30 PM with the first hour to be public comment to be limited to three minutes per speaker. A roll call vote resulted in the motion being carried with eight commissioners voting in the affirmative, 5 commissioners voting in the negative, one abstention, and one not voting.

9. ADJOURN

Commissioner Jarret moved to adjourn and Commissioner Cannity seconded. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

Respectfully submitted by Court Cline, September 29, 2020.

DRAFT