

# Northampton Policing Review Full Commission Meeting

MEETING AGENDA  
Tuesday, February 9, 2021  
6-8pm  
Remote Meeting

**Join the Remote Meeting:**

<https://zoom.us/j/97296945551?pwd=dHZmYmh1ZktZOXdJRkpHcEMrRFRNdz09>

**Meeting ID:** 972 9694 5551 **Passcode:** 504441

**Or by telephone, call:** +1 929 436 2866

1. Call to Order
  - Announcement of Zoom Recording
  - Roll Call
  - Approval of Meeting Minutes
2. Public comment (15 minutes)
3. Discussion topic: Inviting speakers (5 minutes)
4. Discussion topic: Flow and format of the public hearing (5 minutes)
5. Discussion topic: Consensus model for recommendations and points of agreement (45 minutes)
6. Discussion topic: A new department (30 minutes)
7. Subcommittee Updates:
  - Alternatives to Policing (5 minutes)
  - Policies and Services (5 minutes)
  - Outreach Subcommittee (5 minutes)
  - Spending and Contracts (5 minutes)
8. Adjourn

## **1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Dan Cannity at 6:05PM.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT OF ZOOM RECORDING**

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis 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.

### **Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman Present**

Commissioner Booker Bush Present  
Commissioner Dan Cannity (co-chair) Present  
Commissioner Nick Fleisher Present  
Commissioner David Hoose Present  
Commissioner Alex Jarrett Present  
Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido Present  
Commissioner Nnamdi Pole Present  
Commissioner Michael Quinlan Present  
Commissioner Josey Rosales Present  
Commissioner Cynthia Suopis Present  
Commissioner Carol Owen Not Present  
Commissioner Kris Banks Not Present  
Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman Nor Present

### **Approval of the Minutes**

Moved to approve the minutes from February 2nd, 2020. Minutes were approved unanimously.

## **2. Public comment (15 minutes)**

Community member Robert Eastman. Hoped they'd have more convos from the beginning. See why they intended having marginalized voices on the commission.

Community member Jxhn Martin read from an article that states training does not work in terms of policing. They said this research and other research showcases that police can do bias training for three years and still shoot a peaceful black protester. They urge the commission to look into community-led alternatives.

Community member Daniella Amodeo (Arts Council Chair) said commission members should be paid and said she is appy to advocate this outside of this meeting as well. She echoed Jxhn's comment and said training does not work. She said she experienced a hate crime, filed a police report, which she followed up with Councillor Nash, who suggested her to

speak with the chief of police. She said she asked her questions about the defund movement, and noted how personally her team is taking this moment. She said

Community member Sophie Maki suggested that for people that have been most negatively impacted by police, are people who understand more than anyone that these reforms are not going to work, or offer the safety that people need. They said reducing dunning from the police and figuring out where it can go in terms of community mental health support versus more police training or programs is essential.

Community member Rye Buckley read paraphrased quotes from the last meeting.

Community Ashwin Ravikumar (Climate Action Committee) said they read the piece in the shoestring about this work. He said they uplifted Javier, Dan, Josey, and Booker's bold ideas. He thanked Booker for facilitating the last Alternatives subcommittee meeting. He said in Austin Texas, they were able to buy hotel space for houseless people by divesting from policing. He noted Seattle diverted a portion of 18% to climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. He said Amherst has 36 cops and 1 sustainability commissioner and that Martin Luther King Junior said a budget is a moral document and tells you what a community is prioritizing.

### **3. Discussion topic: Inviting speakers (5 minutes)**

Commissioner Dan Cannity said one of the groups is Northampton Abolition Now group, who has a list of demands, he said he was thinking it would be useful to have them do a 10 minutes presentation of their demands, as well as a 10 minute question and answer.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said there seems to be a lack of common language, which would be useful for the commissioner to create. He said the commission has received a lot of good material from Abolition Now and he would like to go deeper into that work.

Commissioner Alex Jarret said he's interested in hearing from Hampshire Hope which is connected to the Northampton Health Department. He said he saw an interesting position that spoke about harm reduction philosophy. He said he's interested in someone coming from there and explaining their process at present.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole offered if the commission would like to connect with Smith College.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he appreciates if they can come, or send an email, rather than being included in the reporting. He said he's interested in hearing from Smith College who seems to be supporting Black Lives Matter.

### **4. Discussion topic: Flow and format of the public hearing (5 minutes)**

Commissioner Dan Cannity said during the next public hearing, the commission will be reducing the time from 10 minutes to 7 minutes during the public hearing. He said there will also be a five minute break every hour. Spanish translation services and the live transcription will be available.

Commissioner Booker Bush suggested that no one speak for more than 5 minutes.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said he wants to offer more time than public comment but

balancing that time if they want to have responses back.

**5. Discussion topic: Consensus model for recommendations and points of agreement (45 minutes) [Document Linked Here.](#)**

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis said she just got a response from the city solicitor. She said the plan was to do green, yellow, red light on the list of statements drafted by the co-chairs, but that the city solicitor said it cannot be done and would be a violation of open meeting law if the responses were received directly. She prompted the commission to comment on any one or all of the points, particularly from the perspective of what you think might be a problem personally.

Commissioner David Hoose said there's a lot in the document he likes. He named #5, #6, #7 as ones that stood out to him that he likes. He said he doesn't like #1 because it is unnecessarily dogmatic, and infused with a leftist view of the world, which is unhelpful to sell this to a broader public. He said he's worried the commission will be written off, and that this fuels this kind of thinking.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said he seconded David's Comments. He said the first statement is wildly overreaching and it will derail this process. He said he doesn't support this language, but that there are other numbers he does support.

Commissioner Josey Rosales disagreed with both commissioners. They said seeing the first point as dogmatic is reductive to the conversations about racism and policing's turn toward militarization. They said they don't think this makes them looney leftists so much as it is an observation of reality through empirical data.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said even the chief of police recognized that the department reflects the racism that is present in Northampton as well as in the system at large. He said where the commissioners are setting the bar, is justified to make that statement. He wondered what language would make sense to acknowledge that the NPD is not immune from systemic racism and the influences of militaristic attitudes and institutional policies in order to move forward.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he appreciates how this document is laid out in order to start having these conversations. He said in relation to #1, he asked the commission, if it believes whether we live in a white supremacist system, and that we live in a system that is racist, and that military involvement is analyzed when creating the budget. He said this statement is the context.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said he had a similar response to Commissioner David and Commissioner Nnamdi Pole when he read this document this morning, but realized he's supposed to feel uncomfortable so we have to take this on and read this and feel uncomfortable. He said items #2-15 strike him as constructive, versus #1 strikes him as inflammatory.

Commissioner Alex Jarret said the whole society is permeated with this culture. He said the Northampton Police is one expression of that.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said he understands the importance of addressing realities trying to be direct as possible. He said he also agrees that discomfort may be a part of this for many people. He said he thinks this would be read as a personal attack on the NPD,

that's the read it would be perceived, and feels it could be written differently.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said the commission can build the context needed to build. He said he knows that the NPD is embedded in a white supremacist system, but if people are needing more general language, it's fine. He said at different localities across the commonwealth what we're seeing across the board is white liberalist exceptionalism tendency- saying their NPD is the most progressive out of all of them. He said that's complicated because people don't understand, we're talking about the systemic issue. He said one of the things the commission has to think about is that police are people but they are people with guns. He said saying that they are just people doesn't make the cut because we live in a country where a person of color has to be able to handle high stress level situations in front of a cop and officers are unable to control themselves and that people of color have to. He said that person doesn't have any training and that when talking about expectations for people who have a certain role in this system, we have to go up.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis said language is going to be important. She said her and Dan will see how they can do a poll and at the same time look at the language so that is a value. She said this will be part of making that case.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said the first statement that could be fact based, he feels like he doesn't need to appeal to white supremacy. He said he would love to bring the NPD on board as agreeing with everything that they're saying.

Commissioner Dan Cannity mentioned the statement from Michael in terms of the possibility of a new department.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan noted the board of health has committed to working with the city to try to create equitable solutions, including orders and ordinances and that the board is willing to assist. He said the council passed a resolution to combat racism in Black and Latino communities. He said maybe the commission should think about how it could together two resolutions which could bring the board of health as well as city council that could drum up a lot of support.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he has appreciated during the last eight meetings talking about the possibility of a new department. He said he feels that's one of the most concrete steps and recommendations. He said he thinks it should be followed by a recommendation about structure because there has to be accountability.

Commissioner Alex Jarrett said in thinking about accountability it may be worth looking into a board that could advise the department for example how the Board of health is connected to the health department. He said it has legal powers the state gives it, while there are other boards that are purely advisory. He said it may be worth looking into seeing how much you can build that accountability in.

Commissioner David Hoose said some things may not neatly fit into the department. He said the commission needs to be thinking about what the police does that the commission needs to remove from the police. He said he feels frustrated that the commission hasn't talked about traffic a lot. He said he asked the chief how to account for despite all the training and hiring practices that black people still get killed in the course of traffic stops. She said she doesn't know the answer. He said there is an answer and the answer he was because racism is such a part of our national psyche that you can't educate and train your way out of it, so the only thing you can do is to reduce the number of times people of color have to interact

with an armed person. He said that's not even talking about the thousands of microaggressions a day in these police motor vehicle contexts. He said he's not sure that that fits into a new department of community care. He wondered what the committee has consensus on removing from police control.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said having an entity in the city to think about minority needs makes a lot of sense. He said the chief said police find themselves involved in business that gets them into trouble, because they're a 24/7 service. He said whatever entity the commission thinks about needs to be available 24/7 which might have financial implications. He said even if police got out of everything but serious crime, there would need a minimal department like 5 officers to be present at all times to deal with emergencies which would cost money.

Commissioner Alex Jarrett said in discussing subcommittee proposals it could be important to think about priorities, phases and what could fit into this fiscal year.

Commissioner Booker Bush said it would be better if an entity began its work in a smaller group. He noted a safety committee which would include health as well as traffic.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said this may be a great time to have joint subcommittee meetings.

Commissioner Josey Rosales said they've been exploring staffing numbers and looking at budgetary effect of those changes as long as the quality of services as well as the contractual obligation the city has to have a department. He said there is no law that mandates a maximum or minimum for a police force which is something to think about.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said he will meet with Cynthia Suopis and integrate commissioner's thoughts.

## **Updates from subcommittees**

### Alternatives

Commissioner Booker invited the public to the next meeting, where the Chief of police will be joining. He also noted the committee is working on priorities and writing. He said the committee had a rather intense last meeting where commissioners leaned into discomfort, and had a discussion about the commission work.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said it was an incredibly provocative, honest, constructive conversation and asked Noa to send the link to the commission.

### Outreach

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said the subcommittee was unable to meet last week because he had to present on a panel about immigration in Springfield. He said the committee will be hopefully meeting this Saturday after 2pm. He said he needs to finalize and get clarity from Dan in relation to the online survey. He said he hopes that for the last public hearing, the commission will be able to reach affected community.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said he will be meeting with the city today about the survey.

### Policies

Commissioner Nick Fleisher stated the committee met with the chief last night and had a productive meeting.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said the chief let the committee know about inaccuracies in the report. He said they were given a list of things that were inaccurate and said they should be revisited by the commission and see if they actually are inaccuracies.

### Spending & Contracts

Commissioner Josey Rosales said the committee has been looking at models for displaying data, and what it might look like to fund the potable water access with an allocation of the initial cut from the budget.

## **10. Adjourn**

**Commissioner Nick Fleisher moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00pm.  
Commissioner Alex Jarret seconded. The motion adjourn was passed unanimously.**