

*** DRAFT ***

Northampton Policing Review Public Hearing #2

MEETING AGENDA
Thursday, February 11, 2021
6:30pm
Remote Meeting

Join the Remote Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/98933259919?pwd=SUttUi9WbGxsZmh2bjloK2RyMkRuZz09>

Meeting ID: 989 3325 9919

Passcode: 555836

Or by telephone, call: +1 929 436 2866

1. Call to Order
 - Announcement of Zoom Recording
2. Announcement of structure of meeting
 - Public comment will be extended to 7 minutes. Commenters may opt to receive a response from the commission. This will be included in the 7 minute time.
 - Every hour the meeting will be paused for 5 minutes to allow people to address their needs.
3. Public comment
4. Adjourn

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Cynthia Suopis at 6:06PM.

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 arrived at 6:25pm

Commissioner Alex Jarrett Present

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido Present

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole not present

Commissioner Michael Quinlan Present

Commissioner Josey Rosales Present

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis Present

Commissioner Carol Owen Present

Commissioner Kris Banks Present

2. Public comment

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis made a comment, explaining each speaker has 7 minutes maximum in order to speak, and or offer questions to commissioners. She encouraged commissioner support.

Community member Patrick Waite said they have been following the commission since it started and was struck by a comment which states the police department's bias is a reflection of the community's bias. He said as a white middle class male living in Northampton, white men speak in a complex language full of microaggression that most of us perceived as more than benign. Utterances can take many forms like a simple remark of " i like downtown, but all the homeless". He said these biases are held by most of us and are real. He said he brings this up because in society, police have a special role, and with that role comes a special level of power and privilege and biases within a police force and it's personal can manifest in many ways that can cause severe repercussions, often with deadly results for black and brown people. He said these biases can involve who gets a verbal warning versus a citation, and who gets an arrest on their record. He said he cannot accept that police bias reflects community bias, as if the power to impact a person's life for a person walking down the street, versus someone who is empowered to use a weapon.

Brendan O'connor said he wanted to mention collective bargaining unioning and how this affects the public, and wondered whether this deserves more attention. He wondered

What do the current contract rules do or affect the account of the issue of accountability in policing in general. Flexibility of hiring police is about accountability. Kasper argues that the prospect of funding when. Changing contracts so not having to layoff diverse applicants. Unions chosen to join have disgusting values including racist/ misogynist comments. Wonder if anyone in this union has.

Commissioner Dan Cannity- if there's a major budget change, the impact bargaining The city has power in terms of managerial oversight for the department. unions= strong reason why change hasn't happened. Most of the commission would agree- not looking at defunding department, looking at reinvesting in community. That reframing is important. Interested in talking about what accountability can look like.

Jose Adastra thanked the commission for the time they dedicated to the process. He said there has always been an open hatred for houseless folks in this community. He said he has personally witnessed Andrew Cole antagonizing local houseless folks, even with him present and pleading with him to leave the situation. The person who he was antagonizing has trauma in terms of incarceration as well as interactions with police. Repeatedly harassed, cited, arrested, and fined. He said this system puts black men in prison and keeps families separated. He said the same officers are antagonizing people of color on the street repeatedly. He said there were seven police and fire trucks that responded to the tent fire, and that money could have provided for the care for these people. He said the only way to minimize damage is to eliminate interactions with police. He said he would never call the police if someone broke into his house, which maybe puts him at risk, but that he would never call on Jody Kasper. He recommended the commission at least get rid of this department as it is and establish an alternative to improve housing structure, and reallocation into peer and housing support, to eliminate police interaction.

Kate Arcand said she read the Gazette article this morning and wanted to express her experience in Northampton for the past 30 years. She said her own experience with the

police in her community has been nothing but positive. Calm, good natured, decent, and that the interaction was completely fine. She said the police officer was good to the other person and the building and to her. She said she was glad to be able to call and have someone respond.

Sony Coranez Bolton said they live in northampton. They thanked the commissioners for offering public comment. They said they report the recommendations of Northampton Abolition to defund the NPD by 50% and reallocates to services and programs. They mentioned a program in Denver that focused on a Community health, non punitive, non carceral measures saw no arrests and no deaths during a six month pilot program. Suggested a more nuanced approach that gets at the underlying issues that cause people to commit crimes in the first place.

DR said police presence on the street is needed as it's a green light to criminals. He said he's experienced street crime and violence is worse than the police. He said it will make people feel less safe like elderly people, kids, and people who can't defend themselves.

Aimee Frances thanked the commission for their work on this very needed project. She said as a white woman and property owner, she hasn't had much interaction with police but the world around her and in the Northampton community, the experiences that she listens to could not be more different than hers. She said for the most part what she hears from people outside of her racial and class identity, is how the established police both in the community and country, come into this system with a knowledge that the power that they have to wield can go practically unchecked and that if something happens that is an abuse of power, there is a lot of turmoil and stress, but from a professional point of view, most police officers don't lose their jobs and are able to find new appointments as police in other towns. She said this unending cycle of wielding power in such an unbalanced form doesn't make any sense to continue. She said communities need to feel safe and that's exactly what everyone on this call no matter their stance is taking time to work on this. She said depending on the color of your skin, your social status, the life that you've lived, it can be incredibly hard to step out of that place and understand that the people in your community need more help and need to have people like me saying I'm not in favor of having more police or giving them more money or training as these things haven't worked over and over again. She said she believes that if the community gets their actual needs met, it will make the community safer.

Kim Weeber said she saw the article in the Hampshire Gazette. She said she is a white person and has only had professional and helpful interactions with police. She wondered who to turn to when a pipe bursts in her basement and it's an emergency. She said she was charged by three dogs off leash while she was on her bike. She said she called the police afterward and talked to the owner about dogs being off leash. She said it's valuable to have someone to call after an issue such as this. She said her friend was manic and the police was kind and patient when she called them and that they did everything they could do listen to her and take her recommendations. She said it was respectful and nonviolent. She said others don't have this type of experience and that it is white privilege.

Rober Eastman (Ward 3) said as a white person it's been hard to hear comments from other white people on this meeting tonight. He said as white people we cannot understand what people of color experience and there's nothing we can do to feel what that trauma feels like. He said to come on the meeting and describe positive experiences with police is not appropriate and is disrespectful. He said he can only imagine how the black and brown community members and commissioners on the call that don't feel safe in this northampton for this very reason. He said it's not about individual police being helpful. He wondered at

what expense is our safety executed for. He said when it comes to reform and union contracts as well as holding individuals accountable, he spoke in favor of a civilian review board in order to amplify the BLM movement but has repositioned. He said there is much evidence that says Civilian review boards don't work. In brattleboro disbanded these. Shared a law in minneapolis before George Floyd was murdered, tried to change policies to make determination of cops involved with excessive force/ killing ineligible for reappointment as well as , and to without pension payments. He asked the commission, Despite the mountains of evidence of reforms not working for 150 years, curious if the recommendations will be based in evidence or not and why he keeps hearing conversations about reforms that only strengthen police presence.

Booker- you can never be woke. He said you have to keep waking up. Things we thought a year ago would work, we now know is not good. Having a police review commission seemed like a good idea. Isn't enough data about what works to replace what doesn't work which is a challenge. Looking for alternatives to policing that have been shown to work. Need more money being spent on housing and mental health, but instead since as a society, we haven't wanted to spend that money, we've asked the police to answer to those issues. Should not adopt solutions probent not to work. Thoughtful about possible solutions not sure if they work but feel like a place they want to go.

Ashwin Ravikumar said he has a ton of privilege and he still fears cops. He said sometimes his parents would call the cops on them which was what they had access to. He said he is dismayed knowing the history of policing starting as Slave patrols and strike breakers, that white people have shared their experiences feeling safe. He said strive for a system that keeps everyone safe at the expense of nobody. He said there are so many great alternatives out there. Don't have big data because it hasn't been tried. Going out on a limb comes with the positive good of taking away harm. Having dozens of cops in a community and only a couple of folks delivering climate justice. Budget is not just an allocation of resources, it's a moral document and tells you what a community values and who it centers in its decision-making.- MLK. not looking to people that benefit from systems of oppression for testimony.

Danielle Amodeo said she thinks the commission should get paid. They said they are another cis white lady, who is a survivor of domestic violence, sexual assault, and has encountered police that dont matter and are not germain to this call. Support for Northampton Abolition Now's demands cutting for 50% and said it's a reasonable ask. Suggested reading their work. Asking for reallocation does not mean there's no one to call when dogs attack you, it just means that someone with a gun doesn't show up who is completely trained to support and help in that situation. All these services you've had that are positive, they can still happen and be safe for us, you just have someone show up who isn't part of a problematic situation. Those things still happen in a world that has less police budget. She asked What kind of convos are you having that imagine a possible future with a smaller police budget in northampton and how that could positively affect the Northampton community.

Javier Luengo-Garrido said it's important for everyone to come to the meetings because these conversations are happening. He said reinvesting is not new and happens all of the time. He said people who are having positive experiences with police is going to continue happening. We do know this hasn't worked over 100 years.

Jxhn Martin Called for immediate reallocation to establish a new department of community care and to defund the police department by 50%. Would like to hear more commissioners

speak to Danielke's question. They said as a DEI practitioner in the valley, so much of that work is geared toward harm reduction and it's about small changes in behavior and language. Crafting space for individuals to map their own learning. Has everything to do with which folks are not surrounded by families that support continued education and critical learning. Highlighted Ashwin's comment: working with local organizations that have peer led responses. Invited commissioners to imagine within this question

Dan- imagine what Rachel Bromberg presented on, and imagines the right people responding to the right problems/ individual emergencies. Substance abuse/ overdose happening, would love if EMTS were there first and we had the infrastructure in place to have them respond immediately. If theres a fire the fire department should respond.

Carol- did not use the term false equivalency. Has thought about this as a white upper class woman. Said shes had exposure to police here. Do not dispute that there are good experiences that people are grateful for, want us to think in terms of how non equivalent it is when white people have experiences with good police. Has been damaging, frightening and terrorizing to people with folks who are black/ brown/ on the spectrum. Center some of these experiences to those who haven't had those experiences. Interest in finding the best workforce response to social need that's exhibited in community. Right people. Right time. Right cause. Not always police. Have received through default theses jobs for decades.

Sean Donovan said he appreciates commissioners learning their experiences and learning processes, especially commissioners of color. He said he doesn't know if the city will give the attention and action that it deserves, but that he knows people in his community are imagining a different future and that that is really cool. He said he lives in Ward 3 and can barely afford it working full time. When thinking about place for police in community, that this affects poor people, people with disabilities. Said worked for RLC now called wildflower alliance. Survey out to people residents and former residents who have had experiences with police. Share about your experiences with police. White people and social services addicted to calling the police . bigger issue in the ways people are addicted to police. Compulsion to the police responding and the people that give power over others.

Lilliana P.- Just how some particularly white people makes them feel safe and for others like BIPOC experience fear. Neutral even more so than Ashwin grateful in part of my whiteness. Psychological impact of armed presence is also negative. Not do something impulsive not to lash out. Near them or stare at their gun. Reminded take away my life. Hear the gunshots and body camera. Hate

They're not going to hurt me cause im white. U dont have to be beaten by police to be hurt by the police system. Another person who cops strike fear in. requires systematic change. Can be done better by alternatives. Harm they do and stand for can be healed by community safety. Everyone can feel in noho not just some

Nishant- Many convos with houseless people in noho and have heard from them, the typical behavior of noho officers. Would like to relay these. Officers spend their time over monitoring with no real legitimate purpose in a way that can be considered a waste of resources and time- watching the same person for a half a day. Reduce police force and responsibility.

Jackson Kody- (reporter)Hoped commission can achieve and whether it can adequately

achieve Police union contracts, scope of dpt etc

Booker- science and knowledge change quickly. Hard to say a a data driven response .kahoots is pretty clear and that's not a question. Learned about training- clear those don't work. Gets harder to come up with things that are clear work and are radically different. Come from a place where we need to change what we're doing. may need to be a part of the radical experiment to keep things safe. No question we need to change. Hard to give data driven answers. As a doctor there's sometimes not clear driven data. If you have autism ad that person's parent asks for medicine, i don't have an answer. I'm going to try somethings to make things better. Same place in policing. Data about what hasn't worked. Policing came out of a racist structure. I'm a doctor and everything i was taught came out of a racist structure.i work within that system to help my patients. Problem with policing too. Grows out of a racist white supremacist culture but so does eberything we do here. Open meeting law is a white supremacist structure. I'm here working with it. Feel there are some things; differences in mental health response , jody Kasper agreed with : Kahoots are things we should be moving toward. Some questions less clear. Think be: housing people less subject to police issues, figuring out ways that people don't have to depend on police response for issues related to drug use. DV violence victims need other choices than police.

Jackson- How the commission will be combating some of these problems or making recommendations on these problems

Jane Doe - survivor of DV. last meeting victim spoke about most widom have the most at stake when speaking publicly. Active restraining order and definitely in danger. Alot pertaining to positive experiences that a lot of folks have missed. In past its of concern there are no victims on this commission. That was surprising. One of the most dangerous periods is when they report the abuse. Doing so 6 years about in noho was met with a really trauma informed response. Not getting any trauma informed understanding. Some people have made serious errors. Important people know what's going on. Walked into police station was scared. Safe passage two options; leave area or report it. Decision to report it changed life. Can say this now bc im alive and that's because of the noho police department. They were respectful and validating and knew things they would never understand for years. Trained in this area. Ultimately the defendant would violate the order which required two additional officers. Permanent restraining order in effect. It's just a piece of paper. It's the difference between life and death and has to do with police response time. Percent of the police budget adversely affects people like me everyday because it has to do with staffing. A 50% decrease is preposterous and would reduce the number of to 2 or 3. Crime going on all the time. For me blue lives matter and my life matters.

Tracy's Ipad - officer has gofund me to donate to. Bless the department that we have. Do need social services interventions because the police shouldnt have to deal with it. Money already cut should be sufficient. Police in other cities have murdered people of color but our police has not. Need to stop vilifying and start honoring them and try to employ some empathy for people responding to. Cant pay them enough. Officers are leaving bc they're not feeling valued.

Rye buckley- appreciate the work the commission is doing. Hours you work are immense. Mental strain on women and people of color on commission. Wondered how commissioners are Exploring some social services in the area that are connected to the police and support the police in their disproportionate policing of marginalized communities.

Booker- has called police to deal with what was viewed as MH situations

Dan- shared a personal story of being assaulted. Important to figure out where experiences are the most traumatic, where we can make even minor interventions to make sure there's an equitable process. We want everyone to have access to a response that makes them feel safe.

Ya Ping - thanked the commission. Acknowledged earlier caller shared something that felt like a threat that made him uncomfortable and afraid and didn't feel okay. History of policing. Question doesn't apply to most commissioners. So appreciate of commissioner shares and how they have been open about learning new things and advocating for things that were not on radar before. Want to be open- Nick specific things shared in terms of points of agreement that gave impression of lack of common understanding of history and function of policing. If they only knew details about how police were created and why they were created. Markers non spot of role police has played. Not debatable looking at historical facts. What is interest and commitment in learning that history/ invited to history of policing workshop.

Nick- read everything you send my way. Very interested and 90% through brattleboro police commission report which speaks to a lot of the things the abolition now one speaks to. Center for American Progress that I found helpful and down to earth. Not sure what it is you want me to say. You brought this up because I had a problem with some of the wording of the item on consensus list. Learning process for me. Learning and listening and need to listen. Person with white male privilege and hear stories and perspectives of others and I'm doing that. I also now some of the details of police work because of my previous employment I saw police engage in many ways. I'm not sure what you want me to say.

Ezekiel- asked for 7 minutes of reflection from commissioners.

Carol- heard comments about growth experiences of folks on the commission. In growing consciousness it's important for us to support wherever people are in their journey and being understanding and compassionate. Bodhisattva- on way to enlightenment and you're almost there. Divide, vilify and find enemies, when there are people whose journey towards enlightenment is that they are at a different place. Can do major change together and need to be appreciative of whoever is sticking around to open up their minds and committing to make change.

Javier- not alone in this process. If people who spoke on health of police want to say- ways we have been talking about changes to the system starts with the police chief. Starts with a highly trained dispatcher being able to make the decision when a cop is needed. Dispatch will send a cop that's not going to change. Disseminate conversations and thought process a little better. Thinking about meeting with more people. Talking with the community.

Danielle- asked for 7 minutes of reflection from commissioners.

Booker- People are asking us to talk about: what does it feel like to be doing this work. He said he doesn't want to talk about it more. Urge commissioners to speak to what this work feels like. Important and energized to talk about how this work is impacting us.

Josey- been a double edged sword in terms of rewarding doing work that is meaningful. Exhausting to be confronted by commissioners who still want to appeal to white supremacist structures and to keep pushing for reform. Hard to have a mission statement saying we want marginalized voices and feel like we're upholding the status quo. Feeling like my voice is used to uphold structures I don't believe in. Pushing for reinvesting.

Dan- entire process has been a learning experience for me. Had some idea of mechanisms at play: macro level or own experience. Made me do work of bridging those two things. Getting meza level: how they all interact in one space. Take away- in noho have a lot of dedicated police officers who are gung ho about servicing the community. At same time have the results of their interactions are more people of color have use of force against them. More poc arrested. Even at best of times, isnt about the people its about the institutions and practices that impact the outcomes no matter how good people are or how hard they're trying. What can we do about institutional structures so that people still feel safe, so that there's someone responding, and that the city is funded by the city and produces the outcomes we expect?

Michael Quinlan - community served by police who feel impassioned and we have a need to serve community on different manner. There are people who have more training in mental health. Thinking about emergency response and putting the right player into the right position. Enjoyed the most: learning curve very steep. Daunting and rewarding. Listened to tracy and JAne Doe and their support of police is important to understand what the dont alternatives might be. They understand theres a safety element but how to access other safety nets is not obvious yet.

Michaela Brangan (Ward 3) activist with democratic socialis of american local chapter. Call attention to criticism of police preexists the events that happened last summer that created the circumstances under which the commission was formed. Everyone here is of good will, alternatives have existed and do exist.

10. Adjourn

**Commissioner Dan Cannity moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:48pm.
Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido seconded. The motion adjourn was passed unanimously.**