

Northampton Policing Review Full Commission

MEETING AGENDA
Tuesday, February 16, 2021
6:00pm
Remote Meeting

Join the Remote Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/95719932813?pwd=UjhkckZQK0VOS1NNQm5mMm1ZY2tDUT09>

Meeting ID: 957 1993 2813 **Passcode:** 424407

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. Presentation: Northampton Abolition Now (10 minute presentation, 10 minute Q&A)
4. Announcement of speakers (5 minutes)
5. Discussion topic: Public hearing and meetings with the chief debrief (30 minutes)
6. Discussion topic: Consensus model for recommendations and points of agreement (50 minutes)
7. 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 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 not present
Commissioner Josey Rosales Present
Commissioner Cynthia Suopis Arrived at 6:09pm
Commissioner Carol Owen Present
Commissioner Kris Banks Present
Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman

Minutes tabled

2. Public comment

Robert Eastman asked if they could take their three minutes and add it to Northampton Abolition Now.

3. Presentation: Northampton Abolition Now (10 minute presentation, 10 minute Q&A)

Ashwin Ravihumar played Andrea Richie interview on Beyond Prisons Podcast who spoke about how eviction and unemployment, and food insecurity has increased, on top of the pandemic that is killing communities. She said there's a pressure cooker going on in terms of economic conditions that amps up violence because stress produces stressful responses. She said if you alleviate the stress and make it possible for people to earn money in ways that are safe, violence rates go down. She said all the ways we address that violence reinforces the structures.

50% call comes at looking at other groups in the country, 4% of time having to do with violent crime, taking into account transfers outside of the police department. Looking at how other cities landed on the numbers for the budget.

Booker Bush decision occurred after the defunding decision was made and not apart of the initial proposal?

Ya Ping- Seattle the passed a solidarity budget as a package, with Austin they had reimagining safety fund set assist, transfers decided ahead of time, and set aside for violence prevention programs. Other cities have been successful in getting the relocations upfront

and northampton is an anomaly.

David Hoose- mentioned he worked with black and brown low income clients. Remember moments never forget. Jamaican american guy sitting in office sobbing saying he can't walk 50 yards from his street without being harassed by police. Lived in predominantly black neighborhood for 8 years and was on the executive board of the NAACP. Had a lot of interaction with black community in springfield. He said he would hear, where are the police in our neighborhood. We have hags and drugs and why aren't they doing anything about it. Well if we invested in our communities we wouldn't have problems with gangs. He said if it was up to him he would legalize drugs tomorrow. Curious what their response is to the mothers who don't feel safe.

Rye Buckley- Mariam Kaaba- policing is working exactly as its supposed to. Not mean to save black and brown families. That's how policing has been designed.

Ashwin Ravikumar- what are these mothers asking for. Asking for communities to be safe. Growing answer that we've put money into is policing. Do it makes sense in the absence of any alternatives people would see policing as the only solution. We know policing doesn't solve these problems or Keep black people safe. Allow these alternatives to flourish and receive attention so that people can be cared for.

Commissioner Alex Jarrett said he appreciates the group's work. He said there are black and brown people in Northampton who also have that perspective and he understands that 10% budget cut was not imperil safety. There will be simultaneous safety response and we won't have that alternative response in place if such a cut

50% as a start of negotiations. Have a hard time because he's answerable to constituents, if this happened on July 1 this would be a safer better northampton. We have to justify that. He would appreciate hearing thoughts and to express a phased approach he feels more confident in recommending.

Ashwin Ravikumar - want to center constituents

4% of NPD involves violent crime. They could easily be covered with 50%. Desirable short term outcome and not a stepping stone. These edge cases would not be impacted materially by a 50% cut. Need that money in order to fund the alternatives. They won't work without serious investment. Isn't a lot of revenue to be raised in town. Reduce police footprint that causes bad testimonials and by funding alternatives to roll out and expand to support the community. A good mix that would keep them safe too.

Ya Ping heard money wouldn't be getting cut, it would be transferring money to different people who can respond more appropriately. If the political will is there those transfers can be made. Demand and call for bigger changes faster than pace of bureaucracy were used to. Pipe bursting or dogs on dog path- ensure those functions will be fulfilled by someone other than police.

Josey Rosales push back they get is cutting the budget of police will lead to less services and safety Asked if they could speak to Why abolition doesn't necessarily lead to those outcomes.

Alex- said he needs further data. Maybe can talk about gathering more data.

Ravi - Nothing that people need is going to be deleted. Shifting functions. Bottomline is there is excess spending that doesn't do what it says it does.

Javier- careful not to fall into a monolithic way of seeing black and brown people. He said he grew up poor and would never call the police. There was nothing else. System has worked against folks.

Nick- recognized the groups' work. Asked- if they endorse or lean towards a particular alternative model because he's seeing different models across the country, and each city has its specific character and needs. And if you have specific examples of cities i' d be interested

Ya ping People being in leadership. Peer led model. Rachel Bromberg laid out ways inter sm of staffing and culture of org. As long as principles are there of non coercion and community based models that respect people's autonomy and wellbeing and asks what works for them. As the guiding principle.

Ravi- Recommendation can be a moral one and can be up to the mayor and council can figure out details and trust that that can come later.

Rye buckley- last thing the community needs is another white man designing these systems. Doing best to ask and listen to the communities most impacted, at the end of day he doesn't want to answer that question and woul love the commission to find answers from the most impacted community.

Dan turned it back to public comment

Hildegard Freedman no locks on the outside doors. People and drug distributors could come through. Reported someone who drowned who had a plate in his leg the day after because there was someone knocking on his door for a couple of days. Reported collector's copies in florence. Woman was standing on top of car in a bathing suit without much clothing on and she thought this was sex trafficking and she reported it. Someone ((the detective) but she never found out. Been through two complexes with lots of drugs and lots of deaths in her perception.

3. Announcement of speakers (5 minutes)

Workng to get JRH 413, Hampshire hope to give short presentations and respond to questions. Working to schedule in next couple of weeks..

Javier- tomorrow alternatives meeting 7-830. Gaming two codirections of NEll Quit

4. Discussion topic: Public hearing and meetings with the chief debrief (30 minutes)

Dan- more concern from people in meetings and emails about who is going to keep them safe. A Lot of things are about plumbing, dogs on the loose, maintaining relationships with school admins, that are not necessarily related to police but are related to community safety. How to communicate that effectively. Diff between safety and police. Feeling uncomfortable versus unsafe and ways to make that make sense for people. Not sure he's effectively figured that out.

Cynthia- Reactions to hearings or chief presence?

Josey Rosales - a lot of people who called in who spoke positively about the police gave us these instances of community safety that could have been done by someone who didn't have a firearm on hand. Happy they've had positive experiences and know those instances of safety and being heard and having the social programs necessary would not only.

Shifting responsibility to other structure that does not have the same stigma

Nnamdi pole- thinking convo with chief and listening to pre today, reminded of the importance of offering a roadmap of how to deal with services people currently expect police to handle. Maybe we shouldn't need to worry with these details. Thinking about what you do on day 1 with that budget cut. Where should they go for services. Wrestling with everyone has a different notion of what safety means to them. Want to find a way to listen to everyone's sense of what helps them feel safe.

Carol Owen- safety means a lot of things. Code word for a lot of different needs and feelings. Thinking about people have come over decades- people who have gotten accustomed to calling police at first response to a situation. Switchboard operators used (comforting to have dog officer to come out when she felt threatened on the bike path . made her think about speaking back to community with range of feelings and needs. Thinks needs to talk about how communities have gotten hooked into calling the police first instead of another resource. Not going to endanger them to get used to calling other resources for certain situations that don't involve criminal activity or violent action. Got sense that chief was willing to listen to offloading these types of dispatches to other entities. Felt discouraged by professed needs to have a gun when in uniform. Felt she was quite confused. She wanted to have a response to concern about necessity of guns and didn't have any meaningful response on why it would be okay to have some of the calls without a gun.

Javier- appreciate in the last public comment, getting a more diverse pool of people. .sadly getting more people that the system has worked for. Want to push back on equal between positive and negative feedback. How the system is set up is for white people to have good experience and for poc to have horrible experiences. Afraid of changing anything when the system has worked for you. Challenge for us. Most of concerns they have voices, the answer is if you call and you need a cop, you're going to get a cop if dispatch says. Not ignoring their experience but it is a false equivalency to compare these experiences with experiences with people of color. People are unaware of our thought process. How we can bring that thought process to the people who are misunderstanding.

dan-The system can work for some people for sometimes. Just want to match service levels with our values and with what people actually need. Not about individual officers. About structures that allow police to have different intervention points which leads to different outcomes

Cynthia asked for comments on: Individual diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-bias training cannot overcome the institutional history and systemic inequalities that exist in the NPD and institutions of policing.

Alex- was a yellow light on this one. Thinks yes but while we continue to have policing it's worth considering who does policing. Women and people of color and have different outcomes sometimes as officers.. Considering what the best training is, while trainings are happening.

nnamdi -concern naming the NPD, don't know if there is data that would show what's claimed. Can talk about more broadly and would be more in favor. Not claiming it has never worked and can never work. Need to envision an NPD close to the one they have now in the beginning. This language Could have a perverse impact of stopping current training or not seeking to do training better. Working it that strongly

Josey- outside the realm of NPD> to say any one institution has overcome racism is an outlandish claim. To think any training will cure them of all racism is a ludicrous thing to say because it takes a lifetime of work. Training can mitigate them but never overcome them.

Booker- Data is anti bias training hasn't worked. Has gone to anti biasness stuff it's been efficacious. Chief didn't make him feel that the training they receive has been that efficacious. Went to green light on this. 6 months he might have been at yellow light but the more he's read and thought he's green on this. A Lot of data that shows this doesn't work.

Dan- green light. Takes a time commitment to do. Individual trainings aren't a lifetime commitment. Does Not change process and institution itself. Can have a department of committed people but if the policies and structures they have to inhabit don't allow them to be what they practice, it doesn't overcome the history. There's no superman that swoops in and solves the problem. Maybe it can be phrased in a better way . but that's what i was trying to get at.

Carol-important statement to keep in some form. Agree about statements about this taking a lifetime.

Nick- was a yellow. Problem with it is that it's an all or nothing statement. He's taken training that made a difference for him. Could be even better training. Don't want this to be misunderstood and that training still needs to be explored.

Javier - green on this one. Read it as recognition that the NPD exists within the larger historical context. He said he thinks the commission agrees.

Dan- adjust the wording. I don't mean don't try any training. I mean this can't be the salvation of the solution. For me- show that they work. Don't expect it's going to be 100 % turn around. Not necessarily where we want to put our energy. 100,000 a year on training. Does that correlate to meaningful changes. My sense is no. need to see anything that says yes they do work and here's how they work

Josey- weren't in a learning mood- said by the chief. It costs tax dollars and they won't even participate. If they're not in a learning mood, idk why we would continue to fund training.

Nnamdi- find with statement if the NPD was omitted from it. Got criticized for policies work but Did not come away that the NPD has a uniquely has a problem with race

Cynthia- Decide to rework based on feedback

Asked for comments on: Any transition of responsibilities and/or duties from one department to another should be accompanied by an equivalent transfer of funds from the department that held those responsibilities to the new one.

Nick- red on this one. Brought up questions of funding there may be other funding sources, may be different funding needs as it's transferred. Not a 1:1 equivalency. Need to look at

this one more. 10% cut already. Would need to hear more.

cynthia= Think intention is want that 880 accounted for and perhaps moved to a new department but there might be some other items that might be moved from the NPD.

Nick- willing to move to yellow.

Josey- initial 10 % cut- if money were to go to warming center or some way to house people, would see drop off from the police interacting with those individuals. Would see equivalence decrease and 1:1 is good model. Police have increased their budget by 40% and we wont know what warrants that. Realistic to cut by that 40% and bring back to 2010 levels and see community be just as safe. Wasn't spike in crime to that degree in 10 years.

Dan- 880k sounds like a lot but in a lot of ways it's not. One time budget cut for 880k but thats not enough to dunk a department for multiple years. Is the police budget always going to be cut by that same amount over the years. Some move of funds transfer should occur if particular calls are being shifted. Not setting these programs up for failure.

Alex- yellow on this one. Said more flexibility might be needed here cause the costs of the departments vary. Generally every budget will increase and in many cases you may see cost of living increase. NPD had greater cost than the school. Say 3% cost thats 34% increase, useful to compare 40% increase with that of other departments. Are we increasing the NPD more than other budgets. Think that may be the case.

Booker -agree with alex. Will need more flexibility about this. Important to say: why that amount. Said by the time this structure is pushed, the 880k will be gone. How will we make certain money in the future that is cut goes to what we say we want it to go to.

Josey- took apart / Earmarked it for transferability. As developing infrastructures, and hiring people you move those funds. Should consider within five years we cut by 50% so we can get things going, and keep funding the NPD in the meantime

Javier- don't need to start making these things complicated by thinking this granular. Hope to shoot for simple-if service is not happening in npd anymore, the funding goes with it and the budget should be updated.

Cynthia- can work on these items and dive deeper into yellows. Gives us a good platform.

As well as talking about the department

10. Adjourn

Moved

Seconded

**Commissioner David Hoose moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:48pm.
Commissioner Alex Jarret seconded. The motion adjourn was passed unanimously.**