

Northampton Policing Review Commission: Spending and Contracts Subcommittee

MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, January 12, 2021
5:30PM - 7:30PM
Remote Meeting

To join the remote meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/98183382601?pwd=b0c4UIAxa3BqWWlqWW9penhaU1ZQdz09>

Meeting ID: 981 8338 2601 Passcode: 850644

Or by telephone, call: +1 929 436 2866

1. Call to Order
 - Announcement of Zoom Recording
 - Roll Call
 - Approval of meeting minutes
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes
3. Public comment: 30 minutes
4. Further research and discussion on data acquired on policing in Northampton
5. New Business
6. Adjourn

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Josey Rosales at 5:30pm.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ZOOM RECORDING

This meeting is being recorded for the public record and would be available on Northampton Open Media, as well as, the City of Northampton website.

ROLL CALL:

Lois Ahrens Present

Daniel Cannity Present

Michael Quinlan Present

Josey Rosales Present

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Josey Rosales moved to approve the meeting minutes from the December 30th meeting. The minutes were passed unanimously.

3. Public comment: 30 minutes

The public had no comment.

4. Further research and discussion on data acquired on policing in Northampton

Commissioner Josey Rosales wondered how much power the commission has to suggest changes in contracts.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said negotiating the contract is something the commission could recommend.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said there is nothing in the union contract that says officer responsibilities can't be shifted. He said unions can engage in impact bargaining. He explained further, when it is allowed or not is often about whether there is a budget shift or whether there's a moral shift.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said the City of Northampton signed a bill that offers officer pay incentives based on education.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said the NPD responded to their data requests. He reviewed a graph showing the total time of patrol officers. He said Chief Kasper said there were 8,000 hours of training as well as field training, though there's 62.5% officer time that's unaccounted in the graph. He said Chief Kasper talked about staffing, and that Department to Justice Uniform Crime Report (UCR Data), which are averages of officer ratios, which is not a recommendation. He said those numbers are not the goal, they're numbers that tell us where we've been. Commissioner Dan Cannity wondered what numbers might we want to recommend.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens said this is what the FBI average is based on the kind of policing we no longer want. She said it'll be helpful for the commission to construct their own numbers to match the community standard, which means decreasing the police budget and staffing. She said she's interested in looking at the documents that document what the police do. She named community service, drugs as categories of things they actually do.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said many of the categories of calls such as “unknown person”, is actually someone sleeping and a police officer woke them up. He said what makes sense to him in these instances is that an ambulance would be better equipped than a police officer who would maybe call an ambulance and add to precious minutes.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens said this is why she hopes the Policing Policies & Services committee is looking at these categories because some of them are things that do need to get done, but there are people in town who can do it.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said thankfully Northampton doesn't have a lot of “crime” where there's clear and present danger to those involved. He said a lot of this is looking into what the police do with the time that an officer is on duty, and how much this costs to the city.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens said she doesn't want to see a situation again like this where the money that gets defunded from the police just sits in the general fund.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said the committee might also explore where the city council has power within the bounds of the charter, and what would need to change in order to empower city council, who holds public thought and feeling.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said there is a connection made with the public by representing the people as city councillors. He said city council is allowed to cut in the budget, but is not allowed to add to the budget and actually make it happen. He said he's not clear what happens if there's disagreement between the branches. He said in his experience, mayors tend to wield a lot of power until you get into the larger cities.

Commissioner Josey Rosales said their fear is that the committee will recommend both cuts and reallocation and that only the cuts will happen which would undermine the peoples' faith in the police department. They said the commission has to look at what the responsibilities are that they intend to shift, and then cut the police more to cut back the footprint of the police even more.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said one of the many criticisms of this process is that there weren't recommendations before the police budget was cut. He said if this commission makes a plan and it's not executed, if these responsibilities aren't moved, he's not sure if the money gets moved. He said there has to be cooperation, and if there isn't he wondered how to get there.

Commissioner Josey Rosales wondered if there's any way the Mayor can cede some power in terms of the police budget and its reallocation to the city council, especially considering the Mayor's end of term.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said the committee could start looking at how other cities worked some of these non-police-required tasks into their budgets. He said the departments will be advocating for their own budgets as well. He said the committee could ask organisations what they would need in terms of a budget, to take on some of these services.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens said if there's a peer-led response, the staff will need to be trained. She said it's not just about mental health, and it's about all of the things that happen behind closed doors, which often the police get called to, and aren't the right ones

to be called. She said it's important to tell the Mayor not to put the reallocated funds into the general fund.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said the response to emergencies can be better and may not be able to be done in the 20 weeks the commission has been given.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said the commission was created because of racial justice and inequality and that these things take time. He said there's no tracked data on microaggressions, and it's hard to establish a motive and a pattern even though we know that it happens. He said it's a hard argument to make with data.

Commissioner Lois said tracking police stops is data which the police keeps track of.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said he sees this as an iterative process, and that recommending milestones and timelines, and what success looks like in a pilot will be important.

Commissioner Josey Rosales said they would like to look into the budgets of similar projects.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Dan Cannity moved to adjourn. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM.