

Northampton Policing Review Full Commission Meeting

MEETING AGENDA
Tuesday, February 2, 2021
6-8pm
Remote Meeting

Join the Remote Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/98308029835?pwd=M0dKMElhOMkFpMXFEZXZsakhHRk5FZz09>

Meeting ID: 983 0802 9835

Passcode: 339285

Or by telephone, call: +1 929 436 2866

1. Call to Order
 - Announcement of Zoom Recording
 - Roll Call
 - Approval of Meeting Minutes
2. Announcement of new meeting schedule and format (10 minutes)
3. Public comment (15 minutes)
4. Acknowledgement of gender imbalance (5 minutes)
5. Discussion: Final report process and timeline (45 minutes)
 - Draft calendar
 - Recommendations discussion and process
 - Process going forward
 - Topic recommendation for next week
6. Subcommittee Updates:
 - Alternatives to Policing (7 minutes)
 - Policies and Services (7 minutes)
 - Outreach Subcommittee (7 minutes)
 - Spending and Contracts (7 minutes)
7. Adjourn

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Cynthia Suopis at 6:03PM.

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 Present
Commissioner Kris Banks Present

2. Public comment (15 minutes)

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis explained to the public that the commission is shortening public comment to a 15 minute segment. She said the reason is for tightening up the timeline and the meeting schedule but that public comment is welcome.

Community member Hildegard Freedman suggested the commission read a newspaper article in the Hampshire Gazette drug courts working as a turn around tool. She said she is in favor of treatment instead of incarceration and that there has been a failure of detox access in the two government housing buildings she's lived in.

Community member Robert Eastman said they've been thinking about how the black women and most important voices have dropped from the commission. They said the inaccessibility of city council commissions is a major way voices are silenced. They asked

the commissioners to pay attention to some of the more subtle dynamics in the group. They said there are several people who have been consistently saying they haven't been heard. They noticed conversations of restorative justice in terms of the civilian review topics. They read a quote from Cody Broadway.

Community member Lemy said they did a dialogue circle called beyond policing and it's been beautiful to see so many people excited about something happening in city government, which has to do with abolition being on the table. They said they're witnessing so much joy in the community coming from these conversations.

Community member Ya-Ping said they emailed the commission earlier this afternoon with a question that's been on a lot of folks' minds. They asked, "how does the commission overall view and value the perspective and recommendations from the movement of black lives, and leading abolitionist organizations that have been doing organizing on the ground, as well as abolitionist organizers who have been doing work in their communities to build and reduce harm. They said watching part of watching part of the Policies & Services subcommittee and hearing reforms such as civilian oversight boards and trainings and they wanted to be clear that the movement for black lives recommends not doing any of those reforms and recommend reducing the scope size and power of police, and investing in community infrastructure for safety and health.

Community member Aimee Francaes supported and uplifted what Ya-Ping and Robert said. She said she's a white woman who is a business owner in town. She said when she meets someone who holds these identities, they often are on the other side of this conversation. She said crime can happen to any of us and supposedly police are there to help reduce crime, but in this last year, for all of the things that she's read and seen in the community, all she finds is more hurt done, more pain, more suffering, more oppression done by having police in the community the way they've been set up thus far. She said she believes there's a way to build up communities so they can have their needs met.

Community member Ashwin Ravikumar said the Biden administration has signed multiple executive orders that center black lives. He said transforming the budget by defunding the police is not only the right thing to do, but it will set Northampton up to set Northampton up to tremendous opportunities from the federal government. He said there was creative energy this summer calling for big and bold responses like defunding the police. He said the Policies & Services subcommittee is concerning because the committee insists that reforms go into the report which would squander the energy of this moment.

Community member Rye Buckley said they support the Policies & Services subcommittee having public comment. They said police will always have the power to take the life and liberty of civilian oversight board, and because of the power dynamics, it just won't work. They said they encourage the commission to create a new department that is lasting infrastructure for this work to continue.

4. Acknowledgement of gender imbalance (5 minutes)

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis said the commission has lost another female gender identified person on the commission. She said she wants to make sure the commission is aware of that loss. She said there have been attempts to fill those spots but wanted to acknowledge the dominance of another gender voice of the commission.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said he could imagine a process to continue to include the

voices of the people to be able to comment on the report, or on the draft before it comes together; some role that would give opportunity to add a section or some segment so there it's not a total loss.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said he supports this idea as well.

Commissioner Carol Owen said the commission would be remiss to talk about the critical structural and process things that parallel a lot of power dynamics in larger society and leave a place for those voices to come in.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he stresses the power dynamic topic. He said he agrees with Commissioner Nnamdi but finds it meaningless if those voices are not being listened to. He said having a description of the power dynamic feels essential.

5. Discussion: Final report process and timeline (45 minutes)

Draft calendar

Commissioner Dan Cannity shared his screen and walked through the draft calendar. He said the timeline offers having a full commission meeting each week, and reducing the meeting time to two hours maximum, as well as having a specific set of topics that are discussed in order to increase communication in the hopes of creating a coherent narrative. He said March 6th and February 11th are dates the public hearings could take place. He said it's just a draft, but offers an opportunity to enter the project management phase until the final commission report is due on March 18th. He said having a wrap up meeting to go over the final presentation is understood and approved by the commission would be helpful, especially in adding the appendixes to include reasons why members left as well as recommendations for increasing participation and retention in the future. He said the Department of Community Care has come up in all of the subcommittees and the commissioners can start to talk about what this can look like together

The commissioners discuss the proposed dates of the public hearings.

Commissioner Dan Cannity solidified February 11th at 6pm for the February public hearing date.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis said public hearings are often in reaction to something. She offered the commission could put something out in writing for the public to respond to.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido wondered when the Outreach committee could check in about including testimonies during public hearing. He wondered whether the subcommittee should brainstorm with the co chairs.

Commissioner Booker Bush said he is willing to give that decision to the co chairs and the subcommittee. He said if the information can be brought up during the public statements that would be preferable and said the Saturday meeting might be a perfect meeting for that.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said the intention is to have those testimonies in context.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher wondered whether there will be a time limit on the public hearings. He said the last public hearing was over four hours long.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said it's important to give people the time as these are the voices the commission is all accountable to. He said the commission can talk about limiting comments to 3 min instead of 5 minutes.

Recommendations discussion and process

Commissioner Dan Cannity said the next discussion can talk about what the commission thinks it might have consensus on, where there's overlap with the committees, and ideas it can start putting together. He asked if the committee chairs felt comfortable discussing with the co chairs further.

Commissioner Booker Bush said he feels uncomfortable representing the Alternatives committee because there are members that bring a lot of strength to the conversation. He said he feels uncertain whether stylistically committees going to write proposals, or recommend requests. He said he feels in a good place to make demands about mental health services, but not restorative justice protocols (besides the police shouldn't be doing it). He said he's interested in discussing the formatting of what they're going to do.

Commissioner Dan Cannity clarified and asked what committee chairs see for their subcommittees within the overarching timeline.

Commissioner Carol Owen said she has been concerned for a while about how the commission will come to consensus because as she's reflected, she's realized the commission can't move forward unless it achieves some consensus about specific recommendations. She wondered how the commission will switch from parliamentary procedure into consensus. She said she thinks the commission needs to think of some other ways of sharing with one another and someone has to facilitate that.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said it's important to make sure the commission has a model of consensus that is not coercive and that ultimately results in a voice and a direction. He said the reports he has read are powerful because there's a path and a narrative structure. He wondered what consensus models folks have had experience with and said this can be added as an agenda item moving forward. He said the commission has a lot that it agrees on, it's about finding the way to encourage productive disagreement as the commission refines some of this.

Commissioner Alex Jarrett said looking back at the commission's charge, it was charged with recommendations. He said those recommendations can be extremely strong and suggested starting with the areas the commission feels like it has near consensus on. He said those can be the first topics to start with. He said he agrees with Commissioner Carol, that having a facilitation role is helpful.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said he likes that idea. He offered, during the next meeting, to have a spot for consensus models. He asked the commissioners to send consensus models they like or have experience with.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said he's not sure the commission has consensus on the value of consensus. He said he agrees with what has been said and the importance of embracing a consensus model. He said his understanding of a consensus model is that there are

different levels of consensus. He wondered if it was possible to get someone to talk to all of us who has experience with it.

Commissioner Alex Jarrett said his consensus experience is based in some texts and some forums. He said he can look for resources to send to the commission.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said many consensus models take a lot of time to build that the commission will have to do in a compressed time which we need to take into account.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said it's going to take longer than the commission has. He recommended Richard Hendricks who wrote a practical guide for consensus-based decision-making. He said the commission needs to start reading the material the commission is getting. He invited commissioners to actually read the material being sent to the commission as it is extremely relevant to what the authors are talking about.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis wondered if it would be helpful to offer an outline of the document to have something to react to. She said she hopes the commission can have one voice. Said she wants to address comments made about the Policing Policies subcommittee as well.

Commissioner Booker Bush said a rough outline is a great idea and it will be helpful to have a rough document before the hearing so the commission can sit with it and see what feels uncomfortable.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said he is happy to speak with one voice when it's honest and where it's natural. He said it would be incorrect to artificially mute dissenting voices and that respect of minority views is core to what the commission should be about.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said the goal is to have meaningful consensus and productive disagreement as we refine things.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis clarified she wanted to avoid a report that is separated specific to subcommittee and thanked Nnamdi Pole for his comment.

Process Going Forward

Commissioner Dan Cannity said he suggested the commission make time to talk about the new department and discuss where the subcommittees have discussed this already.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido named transferring mental health related calls away from the police.

Commissioner Alex Jarrett made a note about adding another crisis response from a new department.

Commissioner David Hoose said he feels that the commission needs to talk nuts and bolts starting with the mental health response. He said he's been looking into traffic stuff, but there are plenty of other things he thinks the NPD shouldn't be doing and to explain how these things will be taken care of outside of the police, starting with getting consensus around the idea that we need a new department and its funding. He said the commission will have to say their recommendations pretty strongly or nothing is going to happen.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said he doesn't love the "defund" language and prefers "reinvest" because the goal is to reinvest in the community.

Commissioner Carol Owen said she likes the language of "building capacity". She said there needs to be consideration of what gets criminalized and what gets thrown to the NPD that are social needs, which have not been acknowledged, funded or dealt with. She said the lack of attention over the last few decades to the need for affordable housing and shelter creates social situations that then get criminalized. She said she would like the commission to consider what it wants to say about housing, not just shelter.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said it's complicated because of state and federal mandates. He said in the public school system, when you have a kid with behavioral issues, the school system doesn't have the resources, that child is sent to a different district where they can actually receive that and the city of Northampton pays the bill. He said he's interested in more divest and reinvest language, as this sort of reinvestment happens in other departments all of the time.

Topic recommendation for next week

Alternatives

Commissioner Booker Bush said Jody Kasper is joining during the next meeting and will be talking about the current police response. He noted the committee is looking into domestic violence, harm reduction and substance abuse treatment.

Policies & Services

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said the last meeting was spent on the complaint procedure and then a discussion about inviting the police chief. He said the committee has confirmed the chief can come to the next meeting on Monday, Feb 8th at 6:30pm. He said the committee knows there are members in the community who have things to say and so the committee talked about opening meetings to public comment which will happen the week after the chief attends.

Spending & Contracts

Commissioner Josey Rosales said their subcommittee is working toward understanding expenditures and the revenue streams as well as what kind of contractual obligations the city has over the police department in terms of negotiating for their next contracts. They said the committee is looking at where it can reinvest some of the police funding into these new potential departments.

Commissioner Dan Cannity mentioned looking at the Austin proposals and the way they presented information.

Community Outreach

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said the committee is on the verge of having one pager ready to go. He said during the next meeting, the committee will be working on finalizing the document. He noted the committee is also working on an online form, as well as doing outreach to local businesses, newspaper and radio to outreach strategies.

Commissioner Dan Cannity offered to work on an outline with Commissioner Cynthia.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said he likes the idea of developing an outline as a way of organizing discussions moving forward.

Commissioner Booker Bush wondered whether the commission is thinking about a new department as a way to put something institutionally in place in order to champion the proposals for alternatives.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said this is one of the things the commission can talk about next week.

Commissioner Dan agreed to work with Commissioner Cynthia on the rough outline.

10. Adjourn

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