

Northampton Policing Review Commission Full Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 23, 2021

6-8pm

Remote Meeting

Join the Remote Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/97637959764?pwd=cXI4Q0ZLTk5zS24wZUpBcFdQRzBnZz09>

Meeting ID: 976 3795 9764 **Passcode:** 729005

Or by telephone, call: +1 929 436 2866

1. Call to Order
 - o Announcement of Zoom Recording
 - o Roll Call
 - o Approval of Meeting Minutes
2. Public comment (15 minutes)
3. Announcement of speakers (5 minutes)
4. Discussion topic: Continuation points of agreement discussion (30 minutes)
5. Discussion topic: Continuation of discussion of proposal of a new department (30 minutes)
6. Discussion topic: Outline of final report
7. Subcommittee Updates:
 - o Alternatives to Policing (3 minutes)
 - o Policies and Services (3 minutes)
 - o Outreach Subcommittee (3 minutes)
 - o Spending and Contracts (3 minutes)
8. Adjourn

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Cynthia Suopis 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 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
Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman Not Present
Commissioner Booker Bush Present

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido asked to table the minutes from February 16, 2021. The minutes were tabled for next meeting.

2. Public comment

Rye Buckley read testimonies collected from the Wildflower Alliance.

Season Donovan named that they are a suicide attempt survivor and a lot of their call to what they do is from personal experience. He shared the organization does some training in terms of alternatives.

Ya-ping Douglass shared Mineapolis' Safety For All budget proposal. Ya-Ping read from the proposal.

Jane Doe said the commission hasn't heard from the DA victim witness, victim rights law center, and noted in the report draft there was not a lot of information about victims of crime. She encouraged the commission to reach out and get these meetings scheduled and to get testimony and data.

Lill P said they are in support of Northampton Abolition's demands. They said they would like to point out there are alternatives to helping victims and crime besides the police.

3. Announcement of speakers (5 minutes)

Commissioner Dan Cannity noted that Jess Tilly from HR 8413 agreed to give a short description of what they do or a five minute presentation of what they do with 10 minutes for question and answers. He said he reached out to Hampshire Hope and is looking to confirm. He said he will circle back so both can come next tuesday.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher noted the Policing Policies and Services committee is interested in hearing from higher utilizers of police services. He said he reached out to Smith College and got a short report from them about how and when they are using the Northampton police. He said he reached out to Cooley Dickinson and are trying to see if they will submit some kind of written description.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said it would be helpful to have any speaker to come to the full commission.

Commissioner Dan Cannity noted thinking about what kind of time the commission can

offer as the report is due very soon. He said it behooves the commission to think about utilizing subcommittee time where you can have an hour long conversation or more. He noted balancing these two things.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said he feels strongly about having a way of getting written feedback from organizations who do this work. He requested calling a vote.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said he doesn't think Cooley Dickinson is ready to come in person. He said he asked them if they will give the commission more detail and that he will report any results. He said as for Cutchins it's a smaller program and could ask for Cutchings and CSO to give a report. He said CSO is a core mental health crisis response service and knowing how this fits into the work feels important.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis said if the commission can get it in writing, to do that, and otherwise use the subcommittee route where any commissioner can join.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said it's complicated because of the timeline. He said in terms of added written testimony he said he feels worried about that. He said if that is offered to organizations it should be offered to all of the organizations and groups that have been involved and there should be a system for people to do it, otherwise there only might be one or two organizations that do it.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole noted Any constituency that is relevant should be able to write in as supplementary info that could go with the report separate from the commissioners' testimony.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said as long as they have the option to attend in person and submit in written it will be good to have both options.

4. Discussion topic: Continuation points of agreement discussion (30 minutes)
(This is focusing on statements that were red lights or had significant yellow lights in the consensus document).

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis read the original wording as well as the revised statements that had red lights:

Original Wording (This item had a combined red and yellow score of 27.3%).

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.

Revised wording

Funding for the Community Services Department should include a reinvestment of funds from the City, including from the NPD.

Commissioner Cynthia asked for any thoughts on the revision.

Commissioner Cynthia read the original wording as well as the revised wording.

Original Wording (This item had a combined yellow and red score of 27.3%)

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

Revised wording

Evidence suggests that Individual diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-bias training cannot overcome the institutional history and systemic inequalities that exist in police departments in the short term. These trainings MAY contribute to the reduction of a long term carceral approach to policing if they are a component of a larger initiative that acknowledges systemic inequalities in police departments.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole and Commissioner Carol Owen agreed with the revised wording

Commissioner Kris Banks said he's wondering if it might be beneficial to use the word "inherent" versus "exist" because inherent means that it is the foundation of policing.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido agreed with Commissioner Kris. He said the commission should not trick themselves into thinking that the NPD is not imbedded in a white supremacist system. He said the closest training for the NPD is Springfield. He said this department is not an exception to this system. He said he is fine with the language but wanted to state this for the record.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said he is hopeful that a reformed smaller police department that had a more narrow footprint could be successful. He said he doesn't feel the notion that people are so corrupt that there can be no goodness in them, and said this is a kind of essentialism he doesn't want to be a part of. He said acknowledging harm is important but wants to be forward looking and give people a path to be better and more socially just.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said he feels they are talking at different levels a little bit. He said Commissioner Namdi is talking about individual biases. He said he is speaking to the institutional space and regardless of how good people are, if they follow the rules, you're going to have negative outcomes. He said the ley is that the system was started with the intention to oppress which is how police has been used as a tool and that it's not just the NPD, it's nationally. He said the key is for him that you can't fix the system when the system isn't broken and it's working the way it's supposed to work. He said you can help individual people to improve, but no amount of good people in a bad system will produce good results, or if it does it's on the rare occasion.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he respects different experiences but that policing is a structure of the white supremacist system which is a social control project.

Commissioner Booker Bush suggested letting the conversation pause for reflection.

Commissioner David Hoose said the issue is not whether he agrees with Dan and Javier. He said he does agree and he thinks most commissioners agree with the history of policing. He said he doesn't think it's necessary to put it in a report, when the commission is trying to get buy in. He said the less the commission demonizes the police the better off they will be. Commissioner Cynthia Suopis suggested tabling this part of the discussion for the next meeting and to move on to more statements in the yellow light category.

Commissioner Dan Cannity read from a document illustrating questions about a new department.

Commissioner Carol Owen suggested the new department have a strong coordinative function that could improve the immediate connection between need and resource (whether mental health or substance use related)

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he's a huge advocate for accountability and people receiving services being able to give feedback without fear of losing services. He said it's worth talking about how that would function in a new department.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said a place that could create a greater sense of community and feel shared ownership to create the community we would all like to see feels important.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher sees this department as a resource center that would need to be an expert in all of the available options because different people need different things.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said he appreciates the discussion about the department providing solutions across the entire city in terms of equity.

Commissioner David Hoose said the racist imperialist culture combined with an economic system that prizes unlimited wealth has created a plethora of social problems. He said the commission is not going to solve them in the last three weeks.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said he's been wondering about liability. He noted if certain needs are shifted to another agency, he wondered what the status would be in terms of a transfer. He wondered what would happen if the commission were able to take some community service things and transfer them, what liability would be involved.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said other departments respond to crisis and have some form of liability protection, for example EMTS and the fire department.

Commissioner Carol Owen recommended talking with the city solicitor about the vision of the new department. She said maybe the answers are there in terms of accountability and vulnerability.

Commissioner David Hoose said municipal employees are covered but that it's complicated. He said mostly the city gets in trouble for negligent acts for example if the city has not properly trained or supervised people that can expose the city to liability. He said the city is going to want to make sure those people are adequately trained or supervised or they would expose themselves to liability.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said it will be helpful if commissioners can answer the questions in the document. He suggested sharing them with Noa so they can be synthesized into one sheet.

5. Discussion topic: Outline of final report

Commissioner Dan Cannity shared the outline for the final report.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis said the Outreach report will be compelling in terms of getting testimonies. She instructed the commission to let the subcommittees write their reports so the full commission can react and see how they fit. She said unlike the preliminary report, we want this to be collaborative as much as possible.

Commissioner Alex Jarrett said an executive summary is helpful to keep it as readable and compelling as possible.

Commissioner Carol Owen said each subcommittee could potentially make a record of direct quotes from people who have visited the subcommittees, and people who have been doing the work.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said all the commissioners should have the link to the online form for testimonies as well as hard copy. He suggested all commissioners share it widely.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis confirmed the commission will want to get this out there to as many people as it can.

6. Subcommittee Updates:

Commissioner Dan Cannity asked if there's anything immediate to communicate from subcommittees.

Commissioner Josey Rosales mentioned the Spending & Contracts subcommittee discussed what kind of funding would go into a potential department.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said the Outreach Committee deployed the form and is trying to get a lot of testimonies.

10. Adjourn

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:10pm. Commissioner Josey Rosales seconded. The motion to adjourn was passed unanimously.