

Northampton Policing Review Commission
Policies & Services Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
Monday March 1, 2021
6:30PM-8:00PM
Remote Meeting

Join the Remote Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/91427126111?pwd=ZmkvdEt1YXJpRnZUQ1QwVDFtTzc2QT09>

Meeting ID: 914 2712 6111 **Passcode:** 472819

Or by telephone, call: +1 929 436 2866 US

1. 3Call to Order by meeting chair, Nick Fleisher
 - a. Announcement of Zoom Recording
 - b. Roll Call
 - c. Approval of Minutes
2. 15 minutes open to public comment.
3. Discussion/interview with CSO Crisis Services Director
4. Cynthia update on discussion with Dispatch
5. Finalize categorization of police services
6. Process of moving forward with list and report
7. New Business
8. Agenda for next meeting
9. Adjourn

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Nick Fleisher at 4:32 PM.

ROLL CALL:

Nick Fleisher present David Hoose present Elizabeth

Barajas-Roman not present Nnamdi Pole present Cynthia

Suopis present

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ZOOM RECORDING

Commissioner Nick Fleisher made an announcement that this meeting was being recorded for the public record. The recording will be available on Northampton Open Media, as well as, the City of Northampton website.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 22nd.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis moved to approve the meeting minutes from February 22nd. Commissioner Dan Cannity seconded the motion.

2. Public Comment

Rye Buckley said it's a false assumption to assume that it's armed police officers that prevent people from committing crime, this is a narrative that's told in many areas of our culture, but it makes a better story than it does a truth. He also said one point Cynthia stressed that the power of choice should be given to survivors of her is includes domestic violence, sexual assault and also all other kinds of harm.

3. Discussion/interview with CSO Crisis Services Director

Jennifer Cox said she can offer an overview of the crisis service that we have in North Hampton is that we have to sort of. She said there are distinct complimentary services, one being the crisis team and the second one is the Community crisis stabilization unit that is residential. She said it's a program where people who are experiencing mental health issues, significant enough that you know they might need to come stay somewhere for a bit. She said the program can accommodate up to 11 people staying there at any given time and that also in the building is house to the crisis team and the crisis team is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week now you know 365 days a year by clinicians. She said it is a voluntary service, meaning that you know when somebody calls and is experiencing a mental health crisis and asked for them to come talk, they can do that. She said the program is trying to move in a direction where it's not just a one time intervention. She said as far as our interaction with police currently they talk to the police about twice a week in Northampton specifically. She said mostly, they call us to ask us if we could listen to what's happening, where they are on a mental health call and if a clinician could evaluate whether or not writing a section 12 is appropriate. She said then they consider the request and sometimes they can send a clinician out to the scene and sometimes that has really great results.

Commissioner Booker Bush asked whether she thinks training could change how this occurs.

Jennifer Cox said yes with a caveat. She said there's a lot you can do with deescalation training but usually you cannot talk people out of psychosis. She said she often gets a call when someone is being dangerous and you can't always use your clinical skills to deescalate those situations. She said people who are experiencing run of the mill crisis don't call them. She said there will still be times where someone doesn't want to go somewhere and still has

to go there.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said the NPD has had a policy different from other departments that if they think someone should be brought to the hospital on a section 12 (against their will) for an evaluation, they call CSO and ask if they will support that, which CSO has a low threshold because they consider police to be in a high pressure situation. He said the other time is if they think they could extricate themselves from the situation if CSO can take over. He explained a low threshold means that fewer questions are asked of the police because they're presumably in a more urgent situation whether that's correct or not.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said this highlights a way the NPD stands out in an exemplary way and he suggested the language of the report should reflect that.

Commissioner Booker Bush said there is further differentiation that needs to be made between crisis intervention and section 12. He said if a bunch of police show up, does that settle down the situation or accelerate the situation. He said the NPD is in a good place with this compared to other local and regional departments, he said if it was him, he would still prefer it if mental health providers arrived instead of police.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis said she's hoping to frame not in the extreme of section 12, taking into consideration that there are some people who don't want the police there. She said if they can create something to give people that choice is a reimagined community response. She said that ability to choose opens up possibilities. She said there's a wide spectrum of mental health and behaviors.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said some people who don't want to speak to anyone and some people won't differentiate between a mental health worker or the police because of their mindset. He said CSO said they don't go out if the person doesn't want them there, and they don't take as quickly to get there which is another issue.

5. Finalize categorization of police services

The commissioners discuss the categorization of police services in a shared document.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said when there's a medical emergency, police are often the first on the scene when someone is unconscious, and are often the first responders to offer AED revival. He said if we were to replace them, we should think about who would be that first responder. He said if there is ever a medical emergency where there is also a crime, the officer is there to clear any barrier to someone clearing the way for medical care.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said these are all about dispatch making a quick decision about who will get there fastest. He said often the police and the fire department are called at the same time.

Commissioner Nick Hoose said he would like to envision there would be community safety officers that are unarmed that could respond that quickly.

6. Process of moving forward with list and report

Commissioner Booker Bush shared about the Alternatives to Policing process for writing. He

noted the committee is talking about phased responses as well as traffic, which they are considering an opportunity for collaborative or coordinated community safety response.

Commissioner David Hoose said he would be willing to start a draft within the next few days to a week.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis wondered how many phases the alternatives committee is looking into.

Commissioner Booker Bush said Phase 1 would be low hanging fruit. He said he sees domestic violence as Phase 2 which would be (6 months to a year). He named traffic as something that would be a Phase 2 response.

The commissioners discuss the format of their report.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said he will rewrite the list for tomorrow's meeting. He noted Commissioner David Hoose will begin drafting the report. He noted next week Commissioner Cynthia will see if she can get dispatch to talk and noted adding the point about job satisfaction to the agenda.

8. Adjourn

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:14pm. Commissioner David Hoose seconded the motion. The motion adjourn is passed unanimously.