Committee on City Services
and the Northampton City Council

Committee Members:
Councilor Dennis P. Bidwell
Councilor Maureen T. Carney
Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge
Councilor Ryan R. O'Donnell

MEETING AGENDA

Date: May 2, 2016
Time: 4:00 pm
Location: City Council Chambers
212 Main St., Northampton, Massachusetts

1. **Meeting Called to Order and Roll Call**
2. **Public Comment**
3. **Departmental Presentations**
   - A. **Public Safety Communications Center**
   - B. **Fire Rescue Department**
4. **Minutes of Previous Meetings**
   - A. **Minutes of March 7, 2016**

     Documents: CityServicesMarch-7-2016Minutes.pdf
5. **Review topics for upcoming meetings**

   June 7, 2016 - Parking Enforcement

   June 28, 2016 - Health
6. **New Business**
7. **Adjourn**

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1. Meeting Called to Order and Roll Call

At 4:01 pm Councilor Carney called the meeting to order.

Present at the meeting were: Councilors Carney, LaBarge, Bidwell and O'Donnell. No other city councilors were present.

2. **Public Comment**: None

3. **Departmental Presentation**: Northampton Police Department

Police Chief Jody Kasper was present to give a summary about the objectives within the police department and the status of each of those objectives.

Chief Kasper presented to the Committee on Public Safety in October 2015. Since that time there has been no changes in department personnel, including no promotions.

Chief Kasper indicated that Officer Matt Montini has been named the department's Drug Recognition Expert (D.R.E.). D.R.E's are officers who are trained to recognize people who are impaired due to drugs. The Chief reports that there has been an uptick in the number of drivers who are driving while impaired due to drugs and it is more challenging to recognize them as there is no odor or other symptoms associated with impairment. There are about 85 D.R.E.s in Massachusetts; with Officer Montini the NPD will have three. Officers need to be selected to become a D.R.E. and training is lengthy--there is a two week training course followed by a one-week of assessment.

Officer Josh Wallace is the department's School Resource Officer (S.R.O.) who is primarily assigned to Northampton High School. His position is funded through a 15-month grant which will end in August 2016. At the end of the grant period there will be an assessment to see whether the position should remain; this will likely result in the position being funded by the department.

The department recognizes that sometimes there are requests made of the department that are specific to the needs of seniors. Officer Dennis Liptak has volunteered to become the department's Senior Citizen

liaison. The officer may provide training, such as how to prevent identity theft, or provide other services specific to the senior citizen population.

Six officers graduated from the Springfield Police Academy in February. They are now involved in the department's field training program. Two additional officers will be going to the Academy in March. At that point the department will be fully staffed; in April there will be one retirement.

Chief Kasper reports that since she became Chief, the department has completed a few of its goals: new detail/assignment software has been implemented; a department photo has been taken; community outreach officers have been added to the downtown patrol area; a number of liaisons have been selected (multicultural, LGBT, religious, senior citizen) and have received specialized training; "Coffee With A Cop Program is on-going (once per month); changes to internal policies have been implemented (including hiring and selection process); diversity and cultural training has been given; and new laptops are being installed in police cruisers.

Goals that the department is still working on include: Chief Kasper would like to add a community services and administrative sergeant to the staff. This will not be an added position, but rather a re-assignment from within. There is also a desire to improve IT strength within the department.

The department will be developing a recruitment video; they have partnered with NCTV to accomplish this. Chief Kasper indicates that nationwide there are less people attracted to the policing in general, so the department is trying to be proactive in attracting people to public service.

The Chief is also taking steps to bring the department's firing range online. Some work needs to be done to the air handling unit, a trap needs to be put in place (this is what the officers shoot at), and baffles need to be installed to minimize the sound. Bringing the firing range online will mean reducing department costs by eliminating the cost for Northampton Revolver Club membership (approx. $6,000) and the Blueline Mobile Firearms Training Range (Shoot/Don't Shoot Trailer).

There is a long term strategic effort to change the diversity of the department. Currently there are eight women and 2 non-white males. The focus is on changing marketing tactics used to promote new recruits.

The department is currently focusing on narcotics dealers and efforts are being made to reduce drug trafficking in Northampton. Some patrol staff have moved from patrol to plain-clothes and are working with the detective unit.

The department has been actively working with other agencies on mutual aid drills. There are many facets to this program, but the importance of this has risen since 9-11. The agencies meet approximately every other month to work on drills.

The department is also seeking out training to manage on-the-job stress.

The Chief notes that in general, she is concerned about the heroin epidemic. Since the beginning of the year, there have been 15 reported overdoses that resulted in 2 deaths. Narcan is widely available in the community; the Chief believes that not all overdoses are reported. There is a new program called D.A.R.T. (drug abuse response team) in which 3 police officers have volunteered to act as resources to people who have been arrested for drug related issues. They assess department records to determine people who

have been arrested for drug related issues. The officers work with the individuals to find treatment program or other resources to help the individual overcome addiction.

Race relations and community trust is an on-going concern. There has been a lot of things going on as highlighted in the newspaper. Part of the solution is that people need to be open minded; training within the department has been well received.

The Chief is concerned about youth illicit substance use, access and abuse. She is looking primarily at what youths use and how people start; part of that is evaluating what is being sold in our local shops. She has determined that within our community salvia and kratom are sold to minors. While they are thought of as herbal remedies and are not classified as illegal, their hallucinogenic and numbing properties are a concern.

Department morale is something that is on the Chief's mind. She reports that today's police officers are faced with different challenges than those of the past. The department received 38,000 calls last year. A good number of those calls are mental health related. The midnight shift is doing a great job with OUI arrests. The results shows that there have not been any serious accidents related to OUI.

Councilor Bidwell wondered about downtown issues and any trends associated with crime. The Chief reports that downtown issues have not changed over the last few years. She reports that there is not a lot of crime downtown. Complaints are generally related to panhandling (obstructing sidewalk) or are mental health related. Generally when there is a complaint an officer will go to the scene to talk with the complainant. Most of the issues are addressed directly with individuals involved and rarely lead to arrest. The officers work at keeping the sidewalks unobstructed as the city does have an ordinance which specifies that sidewalks cannot be obstructed. There are no laws addressing panhandling.

Councilor O'Donnell noted that the department is working on so many great programs. He wondered how much of the department's activities are funded by grants. Chief Kasper stated that the S.R.O. is funded and the youth drinking program is grant funded. Many of the other programs are funded through the department. Costs are controlled because many of the programs are volunteer based.

Councilor LaBarge asked about the drinking level at the high school. Chief Kasper noted that there is information out there and available, but she does not have the information readily available. She did, however, note that there has been a significant decline in smoking nicotine products.

4. **Approve Minutes of the Previous Meeting**: Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the minutes of the Feb. 1, 2016 meeting; Councilor Bidwell seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No.

5. **Review Committee Calendar:**

The committee reviewed the calendar for upcoming meetings. June 6th was a conflict for Councilor LaBarge. As a result, the June meeting has been changed to June 7, 2016 at 4:00 pm. The committee will discuss a month in advance the topics that they would like a department to prepare.

The Parks and Recreation Department will be coming in on April 4. Councilor Bidwell asked about the following topics:

- What provisions are being made to transition to the new facility?
- How will the transition effect their day-to-day activities?
- What are the year-to-year trends in enrollment in summer camps?
- Does the department feel that outreach in their programs to minority and underserved communities works well? Are there resources that the department feels would make this work better?

Councilor O'Donnell stated that he does not need the Parking Enforcement Department to attend any of the meetings. He reports that the TPC routinely hears about parking enforcement issues at that meeting. He suggested that perhaps broader topics involving multiple departments might be an interesting approach. One topic might be public access to information in the city. To that end, he suggested combining the Libraries and Information Technology Departments. He has been asked from time to time about where public information might be found. He suggested hosting a public forum about the topic of access to public information. The public could then share their concerns. Councilor Carney asked the committee to think about this and the committee will consider at a future meeting; perhaps this might be something to plan later in the year (Oct. 3rd?).

Councilor O'Donnell moved to approve the committee calendar and to extend invitations to departments as amended; Councilor LaBarge seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No.

6. **The Committee's Process for Appointments and Evaluations:** The committee reviewed the proposed process submitted by Councilor Bidwell regarding the Appointments. The defined process is as follows:

Appointments referred to Committee on City Services
Proposed Process

Background

Section 2.6.1.3.2. of the adopted Rules for the 2016-2017 Council session , in regard to the Committee on City Services, states: "The Committee shall serve as the standing committee to review all candidates for appointment to boards and commissions in accordance with Section 2-10 of the Charter." That section of the Charter states that a Committee to which an appointment has been referred for review will have no less than 7 days, and no more than 45 days, to make a recommendation to the full Council. Section 2-10 of the Charter also states that a mayoral appointment will become effective on the 45th day after the proposed appointment was filed with the City Clerk, unless approved or rejected by the Council within that 45 day period.

At the Committee's initial meeting on February 1, there was discussion about how best to handle review of mayoral appointments in light of these timing constraints. I agreed I would write up a possible procedure for discussion at the next meeting of the Committee, based on our discussion at the February 1 meeting.

Proposed procedure

1. The Committee Chair will work with the Administrative Assistant to be sure all Committee Members receive an appointee's application and related background material soon after submission by the Mayor.

Where possible, this background information will include the existing members of the board or commission in question.

2. The Committee Chair will assign to a Committee Member the task of communicating with the proposed appointee about their desire to serve and their qualifications to serve. In addition, the Committee Member may elect to speak with the chair of the board or commission to which the appointment is to be made, inquiring about how this appointment would contribute to the work of the commission or board.

3. The Committee Member will then prepare a brief report (which does not include any recommendation or deliberation) to be presented at the next Committee meeting. During this process, the Committee Member will not deliberate with a quorum of other Committee Members on the merits of a proposed appointment any time prior to the meeting.

4. If the Committee Member believes it would be appropriate for the proposed appointee to appear before the full Committee, he/she will ask the Committee Chair and Administrative Assistant to arrange this for the next Committee Meeting.

5. The proposed appointment will then be placed on the agenda of the next full Committee meeting. Depending on (4) above, the proposed appointee may appear before the full Committee for an interview, or participate remotely. Then, taking into consideration the report from the Committee member reviewing the proposed assignment, and the results of the interview, if any, the Committee will make a recommendation to the Council on the question of the appointment.

Councilor LaBarge moved to accept the defined process regarding appointments; Councilor O'Donnell seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No.

7. **Items Referred to Committee:** Councilor Carney assigned the appointment of Natalia Munoz to Councilor O'Donnell.

8. **New Business:** None

9. **Adjourn**: At 5:13 pm Councilor O'Donnell moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Bidwell seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 4 Yes, 0 No.

Councilor Bidwell announced that he will not be attending the meeting in April.