

Northampton Policing Review Commission: Spending and Contracts Subcommittee

Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, February 17th, 2021
5:00-7:00pm
Remote Meeting

To join the remote meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/92014858124?pwd=d1NER3RPeXVpYnBGMHd6UnBScU5YZz09>

Meeting ID: 920 1485 8124

Passcode: 739278

Or by telephone, call: +1 929 436 2866

1. Call to Order
 - Announcement of Zoom Recording
 - Roll Call
 - Approval of meeting minutes
3. Public comment: 30 minutes
4. Focusing recommendations for the allocation of previous budget cuts
potable water access inside, clean public bathrooms
5. Costs of creating a new department (estimates, process, etc...)
6. Discussion on insights from the general meeting and the public hearing
7. Further research and discussion on data acquired on policing
Northampton
8. New Business
9. Next Meeting Scheduling and Agenda
10. Adjourn

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Dan Cannity at 5:12pm.

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:

Daniel Cannity Present

Michael Quinlan Present

Josey Rosales arrived at 5:25pm

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Dan Cannity moved to table the meeting minutes from the February 3rd meeting.

3. Public comment: 30 minutes

Community member Jodi spoke to strong support for a fully funded police department and to allocate money to the officers. She said she identifies as a domestic violence survivor and the NYPD showed up within five minutes to a life threatening situation. She said she lived in New York City at the time and even though people who have white skin were the minority, she got a response. She said officers need to be armed because abusers are armed.

Community member Hildegard Freedman said there are too many dead bodies and we need to do something about the detox other than what we are doing now.

4. Focusing recommendations for the allocation of previous budget cuts potable water access inside, clean public bathrooms

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said the Mayor has been planning for a resiliency hub before the next cold season hits. He noted that places to sit and to be warm are closed in town right now. He said he thinks the idea around equity in Northampton could be moved forward by an office or an officer of equity. He said having a paid position might add more teeth to this work.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said 19% of arrests in Northampton are of unhoused people. He said when the Chief spoke, she shared that it doesn't matter if someone is housed or not, if they are using the bathroom outside, they get arrested. He said there seems to be a disconnect here and that if people don't have a safe place to go to the bathroom, of course

they're going to go outside. He said the things the commission is asking for are feasible.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan noted the bathrooms could put them right in the basement of City Hall.

Commissioner Dan Cannity noted custodial fees as a potential fee, but said that that's a pretty low bar. He said city hall is a public building and it's a pretty central location. He said there are days where it is oppressively hot. He said he knows MANNA does a lot, but this could be an opportunity for the city to partner with other groups.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said the city does have hired custodians right now. He said if the right measures are put in place, the city has 880k to do it with. He said he can't imagine being houseless and trying to recover from a wet day when it rains all day.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said the data that the committee requested from the district court was incomplete. He said the committee will need to ask for dispositions, as well as ask the clerk's office because they're the ones that set the changes.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan wondered if the city put more money into the warming shelter now, could it possibly be open earlier.

5. Costs of creating a new department (estimates, process, etc...)

Commissioner Josey Rosales mentioned cutting the police budget by 40% , would make the budget go back to what it was in 2010.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said something to note is that the crime rate has gone down. He said the police have also absorbed more functions which for the most part still need to be done by someone. He said there are cost of living increases but the NPD has gone over those. He said if there was a massive cut to the police budget the city and the union would be in a difficult battle to figure out where those cuts are going to play out. He said what could happen is that the police could engage in things like impact bargaining. He said it's important to make sure the commission isn't asking the NPD to do more with less, it's just providing safety in different ways.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said there is constant income from restaurants, parking etc, that are ongoing, as well as property tax bills are paid quarterly, so the city is collecting money all the time. He said the great majority of what is paid out is personnel.

Commissioner Josey Rosales wondered how much of a bureaucratic nightmare it would be if the commission recommended an allocation of funds to be earmarked for transferability, so that as responsibilities are pulled away to other organizations, as does the funding.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan mentioned the Brattleboro report included recommendations for a phased report.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said dispatch is a huge piece of this work, and it will take time to think about all the moving parts. He said the best course is to be realistic about what the commission is recommending and letting the city decide what that role is. He said the commission can make a progressive recommendation of funds and transferability so that the ball is not dropped.

Commissioner Josey Rosales wondered what the committee's timeframe is they're envisioning in terms of the new department developing.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said he doesn't think a percentage cut is going to get the best result. He said he just wants to see reinvestment. He said he personally thinks as the responsibilities are transferred, the funds are transferred. He said to hire well trained peer-responders is going to take time. He said this will be a long term plan, and that the new mayor will have to buy into the plan as well. He said this feels like it will be a 3-5 year process with strong commitment and buy in.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said a 3-5 year plan gives the opportunity to see change.

The commissioners reviewed data sent to the commission from the NPD.

Commissioner Josey Rosales said this department would create many jobs in Northampton which will also meet community need.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said he's interested in looking holistically at what the police budget transformation has looked like over time, as well as what they are concerned with in their budget, when they requested an increased budget.

The commissioners discussed the next meeting day and time.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Michael Quinlan moved to adjourn. Commissioner Dan Cannity seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously at 7:01 PM.

