

Police and Public Safety Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Logistics

Meeting Details		Meeting Key Participants	
Date:	October 8, 2025	<u>Committee Members:</u>	<u>Council/Liaison:</u>
Time:	7:00PM - 8:00PM	Chairperson, Bob Kantor, Ward 2	Chief of Police, Jarod Towers
Location:	ZOOM Virtual Meeting (registration info below)	Recorder, Ana Chapa, Ward 2	Deputy Chief of Police, Laura Lanham
		Committee Member, Julia Dezelski, Ward 1	Council Member Emily Strab, Ward 2
		On Leave, Mark Culberson, Ward 3	Council Member Kelson Nisbett, Ward 5
		Committee Member, Taylor Wilder, Ward 2	
		Committee Member, Evan Myers, Ward 2	
		Committee Member, Jerome Brown, Ward 5	
		Committee Member, Patricia Page, Ward 5	
		Committee Member, Michelle Brown, Ward 3	
		Committee Member, Taurean Barnwell, Ward 3	

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_puM1UbZ5Q9S6sDxw9pJ7Mw

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions.

Agenda

Topic	Lead	Description	-	-
Call to Order	Chairperson	- Roll Call of Members: Quorum is 5 members - Approval of today's agenda - Approval of September 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes		
Public Comments	Public Attendees	Community attendees may address the Committee for up to two minutes/person. The Committee reserves the right to either address those comments and questions, or to defer further discussion to a future meeting or offline follow up.		
General Discussion Topics		- Election of a new PPSAC Chair, to take effect after our November meeting. (5-10 minutes) - Ms. Shakira Louimarre to discuss the work of the GARE team to address issues and needs of the unhoused population in Hyattsville. Also discussion of the initial research (attached) into how small city PD departments address calls dealing with unhoused residents, which was distributed ahead of the September meeting (20-30 minutes) - If time permits, begin discussions around how the Hyattsville community can respond to recent heightened ICE activity to ensure the safety of all our residents. This will likely require more time in November. (10 minutes)		
HVL Police Dept Updates	Chief Towers	Department Update (10-15 minutes)		
Adjournment	Chairperson	Next Meeting November 12th, 2025		

DRAFT PPSAC Ideas for addressing complaints about homelessness – 9/15/2025

AI PROMPT: “In what creative ways are small city police departments dealing with complaints when homeless people take over small city parks and street corners?”

Small city police departments are increasingly adopting collaborative, outreach-focused, and data-driven strategies to address complaints about homelessness in public spaces. Rather than relying solely on traditional enforcement methods like arrests and citations, which can worsen homelessness, these creative approaches emphasize connecting people with services.

Collaborative outreach and co-responder models

- Homeless Outreach Teams (HOTs): Police departments partner with social workers, medical staff, and peer navigators to create specialized teams that respond to calls related to homelessness. Instead of making arrests, these teams build relationships and connect individuals to services for housing, mental health, and substance abuse.
- Pairing police with social workers: Some cities embed social workers or clinical therapists with police officers for calls involving people experiencing homelessness or mental health crises. This ensures a more trauma-informed response and links people directly with the support they need.
- Specialized non-police crisis teams: In some communities, calls concerning homelessness are forwarded to non-police crisis teams, ensuring that issues are addressed by professionals better equipped to handle public health and social service needs.

Strategic partnerships for comprehensive support

- Partnering with service providers: Police work closely with non-profits, faith-based organizations, and county services to offer immediate resources. This can include around-the-clock response capabilities for housing or support needs.
- Streamlining shelter referrals: By establishing strong relationships with local shelters, officers can facilitate referrals for shelter-resistant individuals and even arrange for extended intake hours to prevent people from returning to the streets.
- Sharing data and information: Some communities use coordinated data systems that allow police and social service providers to share basic information, streamlining the process of connecting individuals with the services they need.

Resource provision and restorative justice

- Direct resource distribution: Some police departments equip their liaison officers with supplies like bus passes, meal vouchers, and hygiene kits. This provides immediate relief and helps build trust with individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Restorative justice practices: This approach focuses on dialogue and addressing the root causes of homelessness rather than punishment for low-level offenses. It aims to repair harm and includes community conferencing and victim-offender dialogues.

Data-driven and strategic planning

- Data tracking: To better address the issue, some cities are beginning to track the housing status of individuals who have interactions with law enforcement. This helps to identify systemic problems and assess the effectiveness of interventions.
- Logic models for strategy: By creating a clear vision and shared goals, police departments can collaborate with community partners to identify gaps in services and uncover new, effective solutions.

Many of these creative solutions move beyond simply managing complaints and aim to address the underlying causes of homelessness, which has been shown to be more effective and humane than criminalization.

Several cities have implemented successful programs for addressing homelessness through police partnerships and outreach. These initiatives focus on collaboration, specialized training, and connecting individuals with social services rather than relying on enforcement.

Cities with successful programs

- Houston, Texas: The Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) partners police with mental health clinicians and case managers from various organizations. This collaborative approach has contributed to a significant 63% reduction in the city's overall homeless population between 2011 and 2023.
- Wichita, Kansas: In 2019, the Virginia Center for Policing Innovation recognized Wichita's homeless outreach program as the best in the nation. The city's HOT program involves officers, who help connect more than 100

people annually to housing and other services, leading to a 77% decrease in chronic homelessness from 2013 to 2018.

- Austin, Texas: The Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST) brings together police, EMS, and peer navigators to provide wraparound services, including case management and connections to housing and healthcare.
- Sarasota, Florida: After moving away from an enforcement-heavy approach, Sarasota launched two part-time Homeless Outreach Teams (HOTs), each composed of an officer and a civilian case manager. They have become a national model for outreach, using referrals from the community to connect individuals with services.
- Pasadena, California: The Homeless Outreach-Psychiatric Evaluation (HOPE) team, active since 2002, partners the police department with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health to provide collaborative and compassionate emergency response.
- Johnson County, Kansas: This suburban county has seen continued success with its co-responder program, with the number of co-responder 911 calls increasing from 1,022 in 2019 to 2,260 in 2021. The teams also follow up with individuals to provide support and stability.

Implementing collaborative solutions for homelessness faces significant hurdles, including conflicting organizational cultures, funding instability, and a severe shortage of affordable housing. Overcoming these challenges is crucial for building effective and sustainable programs.

Challenges with different organizational cultures

- Competing priorities: Police agencies are traditionally focused on law enforcement, safety, and order, while social workers and service providers prioritize individual well-being, advocacy, and empowerment. This can create friction and mistrust, with service providers feeling police interventions are punitive and police feeling social workers are too lenient.
- Conflicting protocols and information sharing: Different confidentiality requirements between police and social services can hinder collaboration. Social workers must protect client privacy, which can clash with police needs for information in investigations, requiring clear protocols to be established.
- Differing training and mindsets: Officers and social workers have different professional training and views on how to solve problems. Without cross-training and ongoing communication, these differing perspectives can lead to role confusion and conflict over how to best assist people.

Systemic and resource-related barriers

- Lack of affordable housing: Even the most effective outreach and referral programs can be undermined by a severe shortage of affordable housing and long waiting lists. If there is no housing to refer people to, the cycle of homelessness continues.
- Fragmented funding and services: Services are often siloed, with different agencies receiving separate, and sometimes inconsistent, funding. This makes it difficult to provide integrated care for individuals with complex, co-occurring needs like substance abuse and mental illness.
- Insufficient resources: Social services are frequently understaffed and overburdened, leaving little time for outreach or inter-agency coordination. Many human service sectors face high turnover rates, which disrupts the continuity of care and the trust-building necessary for successful collaborations.
- Unsustainable funding models: Community responder and co-responder programs often rely on competitive grants or one-time funding, making long-term planning and sustainability difficult. Consistent, stable funding is essential for the long-term viability and expansion of these programs.

Challenges related to data and policy

- Data sharing and collection: Aggregating and sharing data across different agencies is a significant challenge due to confidentiality concerns and incompatible data systems. Many communities lack the technology and resources to effectively track and evaluate outcomes.
- Lack of a clear vision: Jurisdictional tensions and disagreements over responsibility can hinder progress. Without shared goals and consistent, strong leadership, efforts can become disorganized and ineffective.
- Conflicting policies: Some local laws and ordinances, such as those that criminalize homelessness, can contradict the goals of collaborative outreach programs. Without aligning policies, progress can be difficult to sustain.