

**Meeting Agenda and Notice**  
**Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission**

Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 4:30 pm – 6:00 pm

Allison Conference Room (#225), Showers Building, 401 N. Morton Street

The public may also access the meeting at the following link:

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/88064525074?pwd=xqME3WyZXzYbv9E42hJ21i7jxcHV.1>

- I. ROLL CALL & INTRODUCTIONS
- II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- III. APPROVAL OF MEMORANDA/MINUTES  
Regular Session Minutes – January 24, 2024
- IV. REPORTS (if any)
  - a. Co-Chairs
  - b. Individual Members
  - c. Committees
  - d. Staff
- V. REPORTS FROM THE PUBLIC / PUBLIC COMMENT  
  
- *BRIEF RECESS* -
- VI. OTHER BUSINESS
  - a. Request for Feedback from Common Council Special Committee on Council Processes
- VII. NEW BUSINESS
  - a. Letter Asking City Council to Consider Bringing Forward and Passing a Ceasefire Resolution
  - b. Letter on Consideration for Reappointment of CAPS Member
  - c. Good Communication Practices
  - d. City Council Addresses Public Safety at its First Meeting of the Year
- VIII. TOPIC SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS
- IX. ADJOURNMENT

CAPS Commission Goals and Purpose:

Perform research and gather data on the perceptions and preferences about public safety from community members, with specific focus on perceptions and preference data gathered from minority community members, individuals who are disabled, and other often marginalized community members

Research evidence-based alternatives to traditional policing

Identify best practices in public safety globally and evaluate the efficacy of such practices for implementation in Bloomington.

Make recommendations to the Common Council, the Board of Public Safety, and/or the Mayor or the Mayor's designee on policies and programs that enhance public safety for all community members.

**MEMORANDUM**

**Community Advisory on Public Safety (CAPS) Commission  
Wednesday, January 24, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. – Kelly Conference Room (#155),  
401 N. Morton Street, Bloomington, Indiana**

The Regular Session meeting was called to order at 4:41 p.m.

**Commission members present in person:** Jason Michalek, Patty Moon, Todd Mullins, Nejla Routsong, Sophia Amos

**Commission members present over Zoom:** Adrienne Weber, Kamala Brown-Sparks

**Commission members absent:** Tyler Shaffer, Jenna Buckner

**Public present:** Mark Haggerty (briefly, left before roll call), Sam Dove (Zoom)

**City staff present:** Ash Kulak

Before the meeting began, member of the public Mark Haggerty made a brief comment calling for the Commission to consider addressing and discussing gun safety in light of the recent escalations of gun violence at the encampments of unhoused residents.

ROLL CALL (4:41 p.m.)

ELECTION OF NEW CO-CHAIRS (4:42 p.m.)

- Cm. Routsong suggested an election of one newer member and one more established member as co-chairs.
- Cm. Amos and Cm. Routsong volunteered to be co-chairs. No objections. Due to virtual attendance of two members, Cm. Moon called for a vote. Passed 7-0.

*At this time, Cm. Brown-Sparks and Cm. Amos assumed responsibility as co-chairs.*

- Cm. Routsong moved and it was seconded to change the co-chair rotation to six months instead of three months. Discussion followed. Motion passed 7-0.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA (4:54 p.m.)

- Cm. Routsong moved and it was seconded to delete items (a) and (b) under “New Business” and to table these items to the next meeting. Motion passed 7-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (4:58 p.m.)

- Cm. Moon moved and it was seconded to approve the minutes from November 1, 2023. Motion passed 7-0.

REPORTS (4:59 p.m.)

Co-chairs: none

#### Individuals:

- Cm. Routsong reminded commissioners of conflict resolution procedures and gave the Commission an update on her advocacy efforts to share with city staff that general procedures are not consistent among the different City commissions.

#### Committees:

- Outreach Committee
  - Cm. Routsong articulated the three committee goals for the year; explained that the committee was the “communications wing” of the Commission; gave updates on the events in late February including approval of the marketing materials, community safety roundtable, and letter to the Mayor; and stated that they are planning a detailed budget.
  - Group exercise (5:12 – 5:51 p.m.) – Cm. Routsong led a detailed group exercise or “problem tree” on the conference room white board for around 40 minutes. This problem tree provided a mental model outlining current problems with the public safety systems and what changes to make:
    - First question: what problems or harms were identified in the public safety report in Bloomington?
    - Commissioners were asked to categorize these problems or harms into groups: Are they symptoms or causes of the problem? Are they social or economic problems? Are they institutional problems? Are they problems related to accessibility and overall needs?
    - Commissioners were asked to further categorize these problems into the three general categories summarized in the report: (1) obstacles and getting access or barriers to access of resources, (2) conflicting goals within government’s approach to public safety, and (3) the institutional gap that prevents a responsive approach.
    - Second question: what are the solutions to these problems, to remove the obstacles or barriers, close the institutional gap, and resolve conflicting goals in favor of human safety?
    - Commissioners were asked to engage in solution mapping and think of the tree no longer as a “problem tree” but as a “solution tree” – rather than “cut down the tree,” the solution proposed was to “fix the tree” instead.
    - The suggested solution addressed in the report that would attempt to resolve the three problems was the proposed Department of Community Safety & Resilience (DCSR).
    - Third question: what changes to the system would be done if the City had a DCSR?

- Commissioners were encouraged to think of health benefits, economic benefits, and institutional benefits including transparency and accountability.
- Reparations Committee – Cm. Routsong explained the purpose of the committee, reported on the success of Black Ancestry Day, and encouraged CAPS members to go to CAPS hosted or sponsored events.

Staff: No report.

Public:

- No additional public comment. Commissioners discussed substance of comments made before the meeting started. Cm. Moon gave the gist of current events. Cm. Amos asked about active shooter training.

Other:

- Cm. Routsong gave a brief update to the Commission that she and Cm. Brown-Sparks plan to sponsor a ceasefire resolution.

#### NEW BUSINESS

- “Discussion of materials for Commission-sponsored events” item stricken by earlier motion
- “Good Communication Practices” item stricken by earlier motion

#### OTHER BUSINESS

- None

#### TOPIC SESSIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- None

Cm. Brown-Sparks asked if there was any other business. No response. Cm. Brown-Sparks adjourned the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

Memorandum prepared by:  
Ash Kulak, Staff



Ash Kulak <ash.kulak@bloomington.in.gov>

---

## Feedback Requested from Boards and Commissions - CAPS Commission

4 messages

---

**City Council** <council@bloomington.in.gov>

Thu, Sep 21, 2023 at 11:48 AM

To: Ash Kulak <ash.kulak@bloomington.in.gov>, "Michalek, Jason Alan" <jasomich@iu.edu>, communications@middlewayhouse.org

Dear Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission,

The Common Council's Special Committee on Council Processes has been reviewing an [Organizational Assessment](#) of Boards and Commissions prepared by the Novak Consulting Group from January 2022.

The Novak report mentions that the City should regularly review the scopes of individual boards and commissions. The report suggests identifying areas of overlap and addressing those areas by merging similar entities or by further differentiating their scopes. The Committee has not endorsed any recommendation from the Novak report to merge any commissions, but it is interested in hearing from boards and commissions as part of reviewing the report.

The Committee is interested in feedback from the Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission on its purpose, duties, goals, etc. currently spelled out in local code as follows:

**BMC 2.12.120(a)**

Establishment and Purpose. There shall be established a community advisory on public safety commission ("commission"), which shall:

- (1) Perform research and gather data on the perceptions and preferences about public safety from community members, with specific focus on perceptions and preference data gathered from minority community members, individuals who are disabled, and other often marginalized community members; and
- (2) Research evidence-based alternatives to traditional policing; and
- (3) Identify best practices in public safety globally and evaluate the efficacy of such practices for implementation in Bloomington.
- (4) Make recommendations to the common council, the board of public safety, and/or the mayor or the mayor's designee on policies and programs that enhance public safety for all community members.

**BMC 2.12.120(i)**

Powers and Duties.

- (1) In its actions, the commission shall seek to promote transparency, accountability, a collaborative spirit, long-term and strategic thinking, and effective risk management.
- (2) The commission shall:
  - (A) Gather data about perceptions and preferences regarding public safety, specifically from: racial minority; economically disadvantaged; and marginalized residents of Bloomington.
  - (B) Research evidence-based approaches to public safety focusing on those approaches outside the scope of traditional policing, including, but not limited to:
    - (i) The establishment of an alternate crisis response phone number;
    - (ii) Investments in mental health care, addiction treatment, community centers, and/or job training to mitigate the causes of crime; and
    - (iii) All other innovative approaches.
  - (C) Explore best practices in socially and racially just public safety measures in cities across the U.S. and worldwide, and to examine which ideas may best be implemented in Bloomington;
  - (D) Make recommendations to the Bloomington Common Council, the board of public safety, and the mayor's administration on policies and programs that enhance public safety for all community members;
  - (E) Promote a broader view of public safety through education and outreach programs;
  - (F) Provide an annual report of its activities to the common council, mayor and the public.

Does this accurately reflect and capture the activities of the Commission? Would the Commission suggest any revisions to this language and, if so, what are those revisions?

This same request for feedback is being sent to other boards and commissions with purposes/duties set forth in local code.

The Committee would appreciate it if a response could be provided by November 20, 2023. Alternatively, please let us know if additional time is needed.

Respectfully,  
Stephen Lucas

Office of the Common Council  
City of Bloomington  
401 N. Morton, P.O. Box 100  
Bloomington, Indiana 47404  
(v:) 812.349.3409 (f:) 812.349.3570 (e:) [council@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:council@bloomington.in.gov)  
[www.bloomington.in.gov/council](http://www.bloomington.in.gov/council)

---

**Patty** <[communications@middlewayhouse.org](mailto:communications@middlewayhouse.org)>  
To: Ash Kulak <[ash.kulak@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:ash.kulak@bloomington.in.gov)>  
Cc: "Michalek, Jason Alan" <[jasomich@iu.edu](mailto:jasomich@iu.edu)>

Thu, Sep 21, 2023 at 12:10 PM

Can we add reviewing this to the agenda for the 10/4 meeting?

---

Patty Moon  
(She/Her/Hers)  
Communications & Outreach Coordinator



**Middle Way House, Inc.**  
**More Than Just a Shelter.**  
Office: (812) 333-7404 ext. 109  
[www.MiddleWayHouse.org](http://www.MiddleWayHouse.org)



CONFIDENTIAL 24/7 HELP & CRISIS LINE: (812) 336-0846

Mailing address:  
Middle Way House  
P.O. Box 95  
Bloomington, IN 47402

[Volunteer with Us!](#)  
[Consider Making a Donation](#)

**\*CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE\***

*This email message, including all attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipients and may contain confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient, you may NOT use, disclose, copy or disseminate this information. Please contact the sender by reply email and immediately destroy all copies of the original message including all attachments.*

---

## **2.12.120 Community advisory on public safety commission.**

- (a) Establishment and Purpose. There shall be established a community advisory on public safety commission ("commission"), which shall:
  - (1) Perform research and gather data on the perceptions and preferences about public safety from community members, with specific focus on perceptions and preference data gathered from minority community members, individuals who are disabled, and other often marginalized community members; and
  - (2) Research evidence-based alternatives to traditional policing; and
  - (3) Identify best practices in public safety globally and evaluate the efficacy of such practices for implementation in Bloomington.
  - (4) Make recommendations to the common council, the board of public safety, and/or the mayor or the mayor's designee on policies and programs that enhance public safety for all community members.
- (b) General. This commission is subject to the general provisions of Section 2.08.020 of the Bloomington Municipal Code.
- (c) Appointments. The commission shall be composed of eleven voting members appointed by the common council. Each member shall have one vote and shall serve without compensation.
- (d) Qualifications. Citizen appointments to the commission must be at least eighteen years of age and reside within the City of Bloomington. Strongly encouraged to apply are residents who are historically underrepresented in local government. Such groups may include, but are not limited to residents:
  - (1) Who are Black;
  - (2) Who are Latinx;
  - (3) Who are people of color;
  - (4) With disabilities;
  - (5) Who are experiencing or who have experienced mental health challenges;
  - (6) Who express non-binary gender identity or are non-cisgender;
  - (7) Who are experiencing or who have experienced homelessness;
  - (8) Who are experiencing or who have experienced domestic violence;
  - (9) Who have a previous record of incarceration;
  - (10) With addictions; and
  - (11) Who have a demonstrated background of empowering historically disadvantaged groups and working to further racial, social, and economic equity.
- (e) Officers. Officers shall be selected by a vote of the commission members annually.
- (f) Meetings. The commission shall meet one time each month, every month of the year, unless it decides to cancel the meeting. At least four meetings shall be held each year.
- (g) Staffing. The common council staff shall provide general administrative support for the commission.
- (h) Terms. The initial terms of five city resident appointments shall expire on January 31, 2022. The term of the remaining initial six city resident appointments shall expire on January 31, 2023. Thereafter, all terms of city resident appointments shall be for two years and expire on January 31.



- 
- (i) Powers and Duties.
- (1) In its actions, the commission shall seek to promote transparency, accountability, a collaborative spirit, long-term and strategic thinking, and effective risk management.
  - (2) The commission shall:
    - (A) Gather data about perceptions and preferences regarding public safety, specifically from: racial minority; economically disadvantaged; and marginalized residents of Bloomington.
    - (B) Research evidence-based approaches to public safety focusing on those approaches outside the scope of traditional policing, including, but not limited to:
      - (i) The establishment of an alternate crisis response phone number;
      - (ii) Investments in mental health care, addiction treatment, community centers, and/or job training to mitigate the causes of crime; and
      - (iii) All other innovative approaches.
    - (C) Explore best practices in socially and racially just public safety measures in cities across the U.S. and worldwide, and to examine which ideas may best be implemented in Bloomington;
    - (D) Make recommendations to the Bloomington Common Council, the board of public safety, and the mayor's administration on policies and programs that enhance public safety for all community members;
    - (E) Promote a broader view of public safety through education and outreach programs;
    - (F) Provide an annual report of its activities to the common council, mayor and the public.

(Ord. No. 20-20, § 3, 11-18-2020)

Dear Common Councilmembers,

The safety of Bloomington is indelibly intertwined with safety elsewhere, especially with the safety of people living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and in particular with the people in Gaza, a civilian population who has been under heavy siege and bombardment since Oct 7 by Israeli munitions manufactured in the United States<sup>1</sup> and by US-made attack helicopters and fighter jets.<sup>2</sup> The safety of all people everywhere are connected by our shared humanity, however, the threads tying the Bloomington community with the people in Palestine are also woven together with more tangible elements.

According to the Indiana Uplands website, this region “is seven (7) times more concentrated in federal civilian defense employment than communities across the country,” and military and defense contractors have over a \$1 billion impact annually in our region.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the State of Indiana purchased an additional \$35 million in Israeli government bonds, adding to its existing \$65 million for a total of \$100 million, on November 1, 2023 with the explicit intention of supporting Israeli aggression against the people of Gaza, whom State Treasurer Daniel Elliott described as “the forces of evil” to local media.<sup>4</sup>

While the proceedings instituted by South Africa against Israel on December 29, 2023 before the International Court of Justice, officially referred to as “Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip,” are still ongoing, the Court has made an initial ruling that “at least some of the acts and omissions alleged by South Africa to have been committed by Israel in Gaza appear to be capable of falling within the provisions of the (Genocide) Convention.”<sup>5</sup>

It is the view of the CAPS Commission that the ongoing financial and military aid provided by the US government and the State of Indiana to support the actions being taken by Israel in Gaza constitute a growing threat to the safety of the Bloomington community by: 1) undermining international norms protecting the safety of civilians in times of armed conflict, and 2) by making our community complicit in these unjust, violent and harmful acts. We therefore ask the Common Council to swiftly endorse Bloomington Peace Action Coalition’s “Proclamation Affirming the City of Bloomington’s Support For an Israeli-Palestine Ceasefire and Permanent Resolution to the Conflict.”

---

1

<https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-bombs-destruction-death-toll-scope-419488c511f83c85baea22458472a796>

<sup>2</sup> <https://time.com/6331133/israel-gaza-biden-military-support/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://inuplands.org/national-security-defense/>

4

<https://www.wfyi.org/news/articles/indiana-purchases-35m-in-israeli-bonds-advocates-say-it-supports-the-genocide-of-palestinians>

5

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/key-takeaways-world-court-decision-israeli-genocide-case-2024-01-26/#:~:text=The%20ruling%20required%20Israel%20to,in%20the%20enclave%2C%20it%20said.>

DRAFT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO BLOOMINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
(2/10/24)

PROCLAMATION AFFIRMING THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON'S SUPPORT FOR AN ISRAEL-  
PALESTINE  
CEASEFIRE AND PERMANENT RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT

WHEREAS, the city of Bloomington opposes all forms of antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, bigotry and genocide, and advocates for the dignity and safety of residents in every community; and

WHEREAS, all human life is precious, and the targeting of civilians, no matter their faith or ethnicity, is a violation of international humanitarian law; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Bloomington joins with our citizens to mourn the loss of life in Israel and Palestine; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Bloomington condemns all violence that leads to the further loss of innocent civilian lives and the ongoing human suffering in both Palestine and Israel; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Bloomington joins our citizens in deep concern over the ongoing attacks on Gaza that as of early February have killed more than 27,840 civilians, including 11,500 children and left wounded 67,317 without adequate access to medical care; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Bloomington recognizes that the civilians in Gaza lack access to food, water, medicine and other basic necessities of life; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of civilian lives are at imminent risk of death, famine, and life threatening diseases in Gaza without a sustained and unimpeded large scale humanitarian relief; and

WHEREAS, the lives of Israeli hostages held in Gaza are gravely at risk under conditions of large-scale bombing and military aggression more generally; and

WHEREAS, a bilateral ceasefire is necessary to allow for scaled up humanitarian relief, hostage negotiations and an end to the hostilities and violence; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the City Council of Bloomington calls for an immediate and permanent bilateral ceasefire to prevent the further loss of innocent lives, as well as the release of all hostages and captives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of Bloomington urges immediate resumption of U.S. funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the chief source of food and other humanitarian aid to the mass of people in Gaza now facing imminent starvation and dire shortages of humanitarian resources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council of Bloomington supports U.S. congress resolution HR786 and joins other cities across the U.S., in calling on our Congressional Members, both in the Senate and House of Representatives to demand:

1. The Biden administration to immediately call for and facilitate de-escalation and a permanent ceasefire to urgently end the current violence; and

2. Calling upon the Biden administration to promptly send and facilitate the entry of humanitarian assistance -at the scale needed- into Gaza; and
3. Call for an immediate release of all hostages and all Palestinian political prisoners.

January 31, 2024

Dear Common Council Committee Team B,

It has come to the attention of the undersigned members of the CAPS Commission that misrepresentative depictions have been made to one or more Council Members regarding a CAPS member's advocacy for fair and equal application of City policies and State laws that pertain to the Commission's work. These efforts were made with the knowledge and support of the CAPS Commission, who unanimously voted to request that the City Legal Department take action on this ongoing problem in September 2023, and with the knowledge and support of the CAPS Outreach Committee, who regularly discussed and advised on the CAPS Member's efforts monthly since September 2023. We hereby ask the Council Committee not to hold any prejudice against this CAPS member for this advocacy work.

We also respectfully ask that the Council Committee give duly proportionate consideration to the other contributions of this CAPS member to the Commission outside of these advocacy efforts. Due to the last-minute nature of the undersigned members' learning about this matter, the full Commission is unable to vote on this letter before the Council Committee's Feb 1 meeting. However, this letter will be discussed and voted on in the Feb 21 CAPS Commission meeting.

Signed,

CAPS Co-Chairs: Kamala Brown-Sparks, Sophia Amos

CAPS Members: Adrienne Weber, Jason Michalek, Tyler Shaffer

## **Ten Thoughts about Working Together**

### **I. Listen**

Learn to listen so that you hear clearly what your fellow members have to say, what citizens have to say, and what staff has to say. Focus on listening, rather than on what you will say in response. State what you think you heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to enhance understanding. Listen with respect for the individual speaking and for what is being said in order to build trust. Listen with an open mind. Urge persons of various points of view to speak and promise to listen to these positions seriously.

### **II. Seek Consensus**

By listening with an open mind, it is possible to discern common ground among many competing viewpoints. Seeking this common ground and creating a consensus means that the process may be more important than the product. Sometimes more study on an issue helps to create consensus and may offer opportunities for finding commonalities of interest.

### **III. Disagree Agreeably**

Reasonable people with good intentions may disagree with one another. Disagreement is not bad as long as the opinions of others are treated with respect. Don't lose sight of the issue at hand during a heated debate. Avoid grandstanding—reasonable arguments clearly backed up by careful homework may win a debate rather than making other members uncomfortable with hyperbole. Conflicts can be an opportunity for new insights, learning, and individual and organizational growth. Disagreements can illuminate a topic in helpful ways and can present solutions to problems that previously had not been seen. The successful resolution of conflict can bind people together in powerful ways.

### **IV. Respect the Will of the Majority**

Live with the results of a vote on a major issue. Debate may be lively and heated, but once a decision is made and a vote taken, it is important to recognize this decision as the intent of the majority of the commission and take no actions to undermine this decision. Move on, without rancor.

### **V. Respect the Rights of the Minority**

Be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority. Respect their rights of conscience.

### **VI. Treat Everyone with Respect**

Do not publicly embarrass or humiliate fellow members, citizens, or staff. While disagreements are expected and acceptable, always maintain an atmosphere of good will and respect, no matter who is speaking. Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people's motives, intelligence, or integrity. Do not ask questions or make statements in a way that will intimidate or judge others.

## **VII. Share Information**

Always share relevant information with fellow commission members, so that all members have the same information. Staff members also work to make certain that information is shared with all members in a timely manner.

## **VIII. Make Decisions in the Open**

Create an environment in which the City's business is conducted in the open and in which debate is encouraged and valued. Adhere not only to the letter, but also to the spirit of the Open Meetings law. Avoid speaking for the Commission as a group outside of Commission meetings.

## **IX. Nurture the Value of the Individual; Recognize the Strength of the Team**

Individual members have differing strengths, interests, and abilities. Take advantage of these differences when discussing issues-not everyone can be an expert on every issue. Learn what perspectives individuals bring to discussions. However, don't lose sight of the fact that the Commission's strength comes from working as a team.

## **X. This Too Shall Pass**

Controversial issues may cause sleepless nights. However, there will always be another issue looming on the horizon that may be just as controversial. Over time, it will be difficult to remember what was controversial a mere three months earlier. Keep a balanced perspective, and above all, maintain a healthy sense of humor.

LOCAL

## In an unusually harmonious Bloomington City Council, divisions still apparent



**Boris Ladwig**  
The Herald-Times

Published 5:08 a.m. ET Jan. 17, 2024 | Updated 7:32 a.m. ET Jan. 17, 2024

An unusually harmonious Bloomington City Council meeting last week included 10 roll calls with not a single “nay” vote. Nonetheless, the likely philosophical fault lines that may tear at this council’s initial unity became clear almost immediately.

Before the first unanimous vote had been cast, two council members planted a flag for their disparate positions on a lingering local concern: public safety.

**Leaving town:** First woman of color elected to Bloomington city council, Shruti Rana, to resign

Local council meetings generally begin with various housekeeping matters such as the reading of the agenda and an opportunity for council members to briefly address matters of concern. That usually involves council members announcing their constituent meeting or reporting what the members learned at recent conferences. For organizational meetings at the beginning of a year, or even a new term as this year, the comments rarely amount to more than wishes for a happy new year and a welcome of new colleagues — though council members do, on occasion, delve into more serious matters.

On Jan. 5, 2022, for example, council member Steven Volan, whose term ended Dec. 31, gave his colleagues a heads-up that he was going to put forward some procedural legislation soon, while a year before that, both council members Isabel Piedmont-Smith and Matt Flaherty urged the community to address homelessness — and all members expressed concern about the events of Jan. 6, 2021. In the most recent meeting that involved newly elected council members, Jan. 8, 2020, both Piedmont-Smith and council member Dave Rollo urged action on climate change.



On Wednesday, council members Shruti Rana, a newcomer, and Kate Rosenbarger, who is serving her second term, had no reports. Newcomer Hopi Stosberg mentioned her constituent meeting. Rollo, the longest-serving member, welcomed the old and new council members as well as new Mayor Kerry Thomson, mentioned his constituent meeting and then said the community needed to address public safety.

Rollo said public safety, as an “essential service” provided by the city has, for years, been inadequate because of low wages for police officers and subpar facilities.

Low wages have prompted officers to leave for other communities, Rollo said, which means Bloomington incurs additional expenses for training and overtime.

**Overtime:** Bloomington's highest paid employees include police, fire personnel

The police department has been understaffed by about 20 officers for years, which, Rollo and other council members have said previously undermines public safety.

Rollo said Wednesday the council also should reconsider whether the police headquarters should be moved into the western portion of the Showers Building, a plan that was initiated by former Mayor John Hamilton and which has been criticized by the police union.

Rollo said the Showers site is “ill-suited” for the police headquarters and the police department administration would be better off staying in its current facility on Third Street, with renovations, or moving to a yet-to-be-determined site.

Council members Andy Ruff, who returned to the council after a one-term absence, Flaherty, serving his second term, and new members Isak Nti Asare and Sydney Zulich expressed wishes for a constructive term but did not mention legislative priorities.

Piedmont-Smith, who chaired the meeting because she was last year’s council vice president — and because last year’s president, Sue Sgambelluri, is no longer on the council — used her opening comments to agree with Rollo that inadequate public safety remains a concern, but said it needs to be addressed with resources beyond police officers.

She said improving public safety had risen to “a crisis point” in Bloomington, but addressing it included “housing, jobs that pay a living wage, child care, access to mental health care services and substance use disorder treatment.”

Rollo and Piedmont-Smith in the last four-year council term were members of two factions — Rollo in a five-member majority and Piedmont-Smith in a four-member minority — that

frequently clashed on major issues, including public safety.

While Rollo is the sole remaining member of the former five-member majority, three of four members of Piedmont-Smith's group, which also include Rosenbarger and Flaherty, were elected to another term.

The year's first meeting gave no indication how the four new members and returning member Ruff would line up ideologically, as all of Wednesday's votes ended with a 9-0 tally, except for one in which Asare abstained.

The council unanimously elected Piedmont-Smith as president. Piedmont-Smith was the sole nominee for the office.

The council also unanimously elected Ruff as vice president. Ruff was the sole nominee for the office.

The council also unanimously elected Stosberg as parliamentarian. Stosberg was the sole nominee for the office.

Appointments of council members to various boards and commissions — economic development, plan, parking, etc. — proceeded with equal congeniality.

By contrast, votes for council president and vice president in 2022 each ended in 5-4 votes, and both offices had multiple applicants.

## **Notes on the new Bloomington City Council:**

It is the most racially diverse council in Bloomington history with, for the first time, two members of color — Rana and Asare — and, for the first time, a woman of color. Until this year, the council had only two people of color in its entire history, according to David Henry, chair of the Monroe County Democratic Party.

Rana will serve on the council only until Feb. 7. She sent a resignation letter Saturday to inform the mayor, council colleagues and party leaders that she will "relocate as a family this year to Missouri, to pursue new positions and promotions for both myself and my spouse."

The new council has five women and four men.

The age difference between the youngest member, Zulich, 21, and the oldest, Rollo, 62, is 41 years.

The council next meets at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday. You can find an agenda and Zoom link at [bloomington.in.gov/council](http://bloomington.in.gov/council).

*Boris Ladwig can be reached at [bladwig@heraldt.com](mailto:bladwig@heraldt.com).*

LOCAL

## \$9M shortfall kills Bloomington police move to Showers. Mayor: Nothing else off table.



**[Boris Ladwig](#)**

The Herald-Times

Published 7:04 a.m. ET Feb. 7, 2024 | Updated 9:10 a.m. ET Feb. 7, 2024

A \$9 million shortfall has ended the controversial plan to move the Bloomington Police Department into the Showers Building. Where, whether and when the police officers would move, and how much that would cost, remains unclear.

Mayor Kerry Thomson said Tuesday the \$29.5 million the city council approved for public safety projects would not be enough to move the police headquarters into Showers West.

Thomson said moving the police headquarters and renovating Showers West, a plan favored by her predecessor John Hamilton and some city council members, would have produced a shortfall of \$9 million.

That option is now off the table, as the Bloomington Redevelopment Commission on Monday rejected bids for the Showers renovation work. The building already functions as city hall.

The RDC took less than 10 minutes to unanimously kill a plan that the commission had unanimously approved 19 months earlier. In the resolution the commission members adopted said “the City of Bloomington and the RDC have determined that while the bidders were responsive, they no longer meet the vision and scope of the Project.”

Thomson said part of the shortfall is a result of the council’s unanimous decision in December to reject the sale of the current police headquarters to private developers. The city received bids that exceeded \$4 million, but the council rejected the sale in part because descendants of the families that deeded the property to the city in 1923 asked the council to keep the land public.

“We are not going to sell that unless the families of the original donors inform us that ... there is a scenario ... that was within the original intent of the gift agreement,” Thomson said Tuesday.

## **Renovate or build new? Other options expected to cost more**

The mayor said the other available options for the police headquarters likely would create an even greater shortfall.

If the city decided to renovate and expand the existing police headquarters, the city would need an additional \$10 million, she said, though Thomson emphasized those figures were rough estimates. If the city built a new police headquarters in a different location and provided space for the fire administrative offices, the shortfall would rise to \$12 million.

“No matter what, we need more money to either renovate or relocate the BPD,” Thomson said.

The \$29.5 million in bonds approved by the council were to help pay to move both the police and fire headquarters into Showers, upgrade two fire stations and construct a fire training and logistics center. Each of those projects — except the police HQ move into Showers West — are ongoing or still in the works.

## **Bloomington City Council president 'disappointed'**

Bloomington City Council President Isabel Piedmont-Smith, who served on a working group to determine whether the police move into Showers was feasible, said Tuesday she is "frustrated" by the lack of financial details Thomson's administration has provided to explain the \$9 million shortfall.

“I’m disappointed that other sources of revenue were not considered, and the estimates provided by the administration that resulted in this ... nearly \$9 million shortfall are not quite clear to me,” she said.

The Hamilton administration had argued — and a majority of city council members, including Piedmont-Smith, had agreed — that a move into Showers would foster closer collaboration among city employees and help modernize the police and fire departments.

Thomson said she rejects the philosophy that co-mingling police and fire administrative offices "was going to sort of develop, just through relocation, a new practice of public safety.

“I think we have to be much more intentional than that,” she said.

The Bloomington Police Department already is one of the most progressive in the state, if not the nation, Thomson said. It has added social workers and downtown resource officers to expand public safety to include crime prevention and provide protection while sending the “least armed” response.

“We have these things that we’re sort of iterating our way into, but we haven’t asked the question, ‘What does that mean in the end?’” she said.

“So building a building before you know how you would like to provide public safety does seem to put the cart before the horse,” Thomson said, “and the numbers were very clearly not there.”

## **BPD Chief: Police HQ ‘is working for us’ — for now**

Bloomington Police Chief Mike Diekhoff supported the move into Showers under the Hamilton administration but said some aspects of the move, especially parking and police ingress/egress remained problematic.

“It wasn’t a good location for police coming and going,” the chief said. “That was really never addressed.”

Diekhoff’s concerns mirrored some of those raised by the police union, which opposed the move from the start — though the chief last year countered the ingress/egress concerns by saying officers primarily respond to calls from their patrols.

Diekhoff said Tuesday the current police headquarters facility “is working for us,” but he said in the long run, the facility’s space and capabilities would be insufficient to support the operation of a modern public safety agency.

Diekhoff said that’s especially true because the city is about 20 sworn officers short and may need additional ones if annexation proceeds. The annexation started under Thomson’s predecessor would add into the city limits about 8,200 acres and 14,300 residents from the unincorporated areas of the county — though the matter is tied up in court.

Thomson said, “I think that these variables that are on the table still, especially annexation, also should inform us, perhaps, the location of the current Bloomington police station is not ideal. If we’re annexing significantly westward, then it should be within our conversation, as

we're exploring best practices for public safety, to have a police station that may be more centrally located."

"What we need in the end, is the best solution for the city," she said.

Thomson said the likely next step would be a work session involving the city council to understand the council members' preferences and to get their buy-in.

The mayor said she was hesitant to commit to a timeline, though she said she hopes to have a direction by the end of the year.

"For now, the current police station will be the police station ... and we will proceed with Fire (Station) 1, Fire (Station) 3 and the fire logistics center. And we are very likely to move fire administration over to Showers West," Thomson said.

"That is what's been definitely decided. Nothing else is off the table."

*Boris Ladwig can be reached at [bladwig@heraldt.com](mailto:bladwig@heraldt.com).*

# UPDATE

## What is the status of cases we reported on in 2023?

Laura Lane The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

A man shot in a tent in Greene County, an Indiana University student stabbed on the bus, and accusations of rape: These are some of the crimes The Herald-Times reported on in 2023. ● Here is a review of where the investigations and, in the case of an arrest, the court cases stand.



A man who had been living at Crawford Apartments is accused of selling a fentanyl-laced drug to a Bedford woman that ended up killing her. H-T FILE PHOTO

### Stabbing allegation called hate crime

It's been more than a year since Bloomington resident Billie R. Davis was charged with using a pocketknife to stab a Chinese-American Indiana University student seven times in the head on a city bus.

The student injured in the Jan. 11, 2023 attack, a freshman from Carmel, was treated in the emergency room and not admitted to the hospital.

Davis, now 57, was initially charged by the Monroe County prosecutor with attempted murder, aggravated battery and battery with a deadly weapon.

But those charges were dismissed last April after federal authorities charged Davis with a hate crime that could keep her in prison for life. Davis reportedly told police she stabbed the student because she was Asian.

Indiana is one of four states without a hate crimes law. So, if a criminal offense is suspected to be based in prejudice or hate, the FBI can investigate and pursue federal charges.

During a Jan. 31 hearing, U.S. District Court Judge Tanya Walton Pratt ruled Davis is currently taking proper medication and is mentally competent for her trial, which is scheduled to begin April 12 if a plea agreement isn't reached before then.

See UPDATE, Page 10A

### suspect in shooting a city

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
Police arrested a suspect Saturday in the shooting of a woman in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A woman was charged with aggravated battery with a deadly weapon in the shooting of a man in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A man was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a woman in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A woman was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a man in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A man was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a woman in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A woman was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a man in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A man was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a woman in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A woman was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a man in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A man was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a woman in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A woman was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a man in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A man was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a woman in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A woman was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a man in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A man was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a woman in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A woman was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a man in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A man was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a woman in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A woman was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a man in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A man was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a woman in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A woman was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a man in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A man was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a woman in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A woman was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a man in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A man was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a woman in the city.

Laura Lane  
The Herald-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK  
A woman was charged with attempted murder in the shooting of a man in the city.



Continued from Page 10A

verbal dispute between two Tri-North Middle School students that had escalated to threats of physical harm.

Vaught was charged with felony intimidation and released from jail without having to post bond. The next hearing in the case is Feb. 28.

## Mitchell woman accused of killing her toddlers

A 3-year-old boy and 1-year-old girl were found dead inside a Mitchell home in late September.

Their mother, 33-year-old Brittany Medina, allegedly told police she had drowned them in the bathtub. She said voices in her head had told her "she needed to send her children to heaven today or there will be someone come and take her two children and her and place them in a dark hole."

Medina is charged with two counts of murder and two counts of neglect of a dependent resulting in death.

Court records indicate mental health competency evaluations were ordered in November. During a Dec. 14 hearing, Lawrence Superior Court Judge John Plummer III said no further hearing will be scheduled until Medina's mental status is determined.

## Bedford man shot, killed after police chase

In September, Daymon A. Hubbard died from gunshot wounds after a police chase in which three Bedford police officers fired their weapons.

Almost four months later, Lawrence County Prosecutor Samuel Arp II said he determined the officers' actions were justified "in the preservation of life."

Arp said when officers tried to pin Hubbard's vehicle in using their patrol vehicles, Hubbard placed his vehicle in reverse, striking a police car. Hubbard then turned and accelerated forward toward an officer who was on foot. In a statement, Arp said that's when the officers shot Hubbard and his vehicle.

## My Sister's Closet burglarized

Local charitable thrift store My Sister's Closet was burglarized in October, reporting thousands of dollars worth of jewelry and merchandise had been taken.

Police arrested transient man Michael W. Johnson on four felonies: burglary, fraud on a financial institution, theft and possession of methamphetamine.

On Feb. 5, a judicial order released Johnson from the Monroe County Jail and sent him to Amethyst House for substance abuse treatment.



My Sister's Closet was burglarized last October with the store reporting thousands of dollars worth of jewelry and merchandise taken. RICH JANZARUK/HERALD-TIMES

## Man accused of masturbating while supervising children

In October, Joshua M. Moore, 35, was charged with a felony count of performing sexual conduct in the presence of a minor and a misdemeanor count of public indecency.

Police say Moore was masturbating in the presence of autistic children he was supervising. Moore claimed his behavior was driven by his addiction to pornography and said no children were touched.

Moore said he didn't think the non-verbal boys he was in charge of were aware of what he was doing, according to a probable cause affidavit filed in Monroe Circuit Court.

Moore worked from July 2022 until August 2023 as a licensed behavioral therapist at Hopebridge Autism Therapy Center in Bloomington.

He oversaw boys aged 4 to 8, most of them non-verbal, sometimes working with them one-on-one with behavior therapies.

Moore was scheduled for a court hearing on Feb. 19.

## Man charged with providing drugs that killed Bedford woman

Erika Dawn Asbury died three hours after buying \$40 worth of a fentanyl-laced drug from a man at Crawford Apartments in Bloomington.

The 39-year-old woman's boyfriend found her lifeless on the floor of the house they shared in Bedford at 1:03 a.m. on May 25.

Police arrested 35-year-old Arron Jacob Drew Reynolds of Bloomington on Sept. 13 on a charge of dealing a controlled substance resulting in death.

Reynolds, jailed without bond, requested a speedy trial, and Lawrence Superior Court Judge Robert Cline has scheduled a five-day trial to begin March 18.

## Rescued while trying to swim away

Police say Matthew Fischman tried to get away by jumping in Lake Lemon in October, but he was arrested after police tossed him a floatation device when he began to struggle.

Fischman, 37, of Unionville, was arrested on preliminary felony charges of battery by means of a deadly weapon (his vehicle) and two counts of resisting law enforcement with a vehicle. He also faces misdemeanor charges of resisting law enforcement, driving while suspended, leaving the scene of an accident and reckless driving.

According to a news release, Fischman's vehicle hit and damaged three sheriff's department cars as he tried to flee. A fourth police car was damaged when it struck a deer during the pursuit.

He is being held at the Monroe County Jail; the next hearing in the case is Feb. 29.

## Parents accused of allowing child access to guns

The parents of a 16-year-old Bloomington youth face a charge of dangerous control of a child after being accused of allowing their son access to loaded guns.

Their November arrests came after an investigation during which police determined the teen, who was on house detention and probation for participating in an armed robbery, carried a loaded rifle out of his house.

During a search of a home in the 2100 block of South Rockport Road, investigators reported finding two loaded handguns in a bedroom and a semi-automatic rifle on the front porch that also was loaded and ready to fire.

Gregory Cordell Baker Sr. and Olinida K. Allen were both arrested on one count of dangerous control of a child.

Baker and Allen were released from jail on their own recognizance on Oct.

30; a Feb. 25 trial date is on the docket in both cases.

## Man faces murder charge for Unionville shooting

Sheriff's deputies called to a Nov. 4 disturbance at a Unionville home discovered a gruesome scene.

Bryce Leighton was outside, hysterical, blood on his hands and clothes. As they approached the garage, they saw 48-year-old Tara Langley lying on the floor. There was blood everywhere.

Leighton stands charged with murder in the death of his girlfriend of the past seven years. The 34-year-old man told a detective the two had been arguing and he may have shot Langley in self-defense when she fired a stun gun at him.

His lawyer has filed a motion saying he will claim Leighton, being held in jail without bond, acted in self-defense.

The final pre-trial hearing in the case is scheduled for March 21 and the trial is scheduled for April 1.

## Man with history of court interactions accused of Dunn Woods attack

Brian Silas Jones II, 24, listed in court records as transient, was booked into the Monroe County Jail in November on preliminary charges of attempted rape, sexual battery, battery with injury, criminal confinement and trespass.

Jones was accused of tackling a 20-year-old Indiana University student to the ground the evening of Nov. 10, lying on top of her and attempting an assault.

Bystanders in the area intervened to help the woman and called police when they witnessed the attack in Dunn's Woods.

A psychiatric evaluation was ordered by the court, and in January, Monroe Circuit Judge Valeri Haughton determined Jones was not mentally competent.

## Stinesville man sought for shooting neighbor

Police continue looking for Bret Sherrow in connection with the November shooting of his 59-year-old neighbor. The victim showed up at IU Health Bloomington Hospital with a gunshot wound to his buttock and said Sherrow had shot him.

"The victim saw the suspect pull a gun out and then place it in his pocket," a Monroe County Sheriff's Office news release said. The man who was shot said he retrieved pepper spray from his pocket when Sherrow shoved him "and tried to spray the suspect but it didn't work."

The victim said Sherrow was fumbling in his pocket for the gun, so he took off running, heard a gun fire, then realized he had been hit.

Contact H-T reporter Laura Lane at [llane@heraldt.com](mailto:llane@heraldt.com) or 812-318-5967.