



# THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

## NORTH CAROLINA

**Public Safety Committee Meeting**

**June 25, 2020**

### **Public Comment**

Hi, my name is Meredith. I would like to comment on first the police budget. I believe the police budget does not need to be thirty million of them here and they do not need an extra \$400,000 this coming year. We are already over-policed in Asheville. We have the highest number of police per capita in the state wage. I believe that the proposal that she's back made has valid it. However, I do not think it's necessary that those jobs be performed by Page. There are already existing organizations in Asheville that have been here for years and years and years doing those jobs that he suggested that the police begin to do like handling mental health issues handle domestic issues within neighborhoods. We do not need the police taking homeless people off the street and criminalizing them. We have organizations like beloved Asheville. We have organizations. Run by professionals and concerned citizens that those organizations that already exist that have been doing the ground work in the community need more funding and we can take that funding from the police force and give it to these people who have been working their butts off and putting their effort forward. Additionally, I am vehemently In support of removing the entire Vance Monument not repurposing it. It needs to be gone. It is an insult and it is liberalism hiding behind. White supremacy, that's the whole Asheville look we like to pretend that we're so liberal, and we're so caring and empathetic. But really this town is run rampant with white supremacy page is clear by the multiple hate crimes that have occurred this month that seem to not be getting very much investigation from the police force. I would like to back to put more effort into investigating these hate crimes than to suck these programs that already exist within the community these programs need more support, and these hate crimes need to be prosecuted. Thank you.

Hi, my name is Linda Newton. I'm a student at UNC Asheville. I just want to say how incredibly disappointed and disheartened. I am looking at the city council meeting and seeing the way that are specifically or non-black representative seemed incredibly disinterested in the pain and anguish that their citizens are going through if you are so caught a call to public service and the stuff that black and brown communities are going through does an absolutely tear you up inside then I discussed it and I seriously seriously recommend that you were signed off.

Hi, my name is Mara. I'm a local medical resident and I have been a witness to some of the protests that have been occurring I will never forget that some of our residents have been tear-gassed bought some of them including children puking their brains out after attending a peaceful protests towards the beginning. I have also witnessed some protesters who are threatened for their safety by white supremacist looking people with a K 15s with no regrets. I sincerely worried for the safety of the civilian here in Nashville, and I would like to leave a note that we do not want the police involved in the Outreach to communities struggling with homelessness and mental illness. I think a PD has been extremely careless during these occasions harming both children and adults who have been attending peaceful rallies. The racism in Nashville is a Public Health crisis. For us saying we are a caring open Community is extremely false now that I've lived here for about four years. We are quietly segregated and quietly racist. We can do better than that. We do not want a PD involved in rigging the 360 90-day plan to serve themselves. Please exclude them from any plans of defending them. Thank you.

Hi, my name is Sage Hopkins. And I want to make a comment on agenda item for after reading a transcript of cheap Zacks \$36.90 day plan. I have this response. I support the amount of the drug suppression unit. But secondly while T exact plans for reform, for example, the development of a community engagement division to be filled with existing personnel and an Integrity unit as well as often as Outreach team. We're motivated by Good Intentions. They still exist within the structure of police reform that I have read and seen to yield unsatisfying results throughout this country who are involved in the murder of George flight and many others had been in similar reform programs and they still have murdered him tragically. So let's stop this now. The funding the police can be seen as a newer truly effective form of police reform most importantly. It's what this community what Chief is ax community in Asheville wants birth defects heart is in the right place with these ideas. So I of Reform so I hope you have taken the time to read about what the funding the police he looks like for a police officer. I want to know he is considering the fact of the police because it doesn't mean he can't still be a hero for our community if the police have far less funding the programs Chief Zack is describing need to be built outside the structure of the police as an institution have cost too much harm, even if they also do good. It's not enough and it doesn't erase the racist experienced by people Nashville have described while interacting with the police from microaggression to death police officers should be open to renouncing their Badges and employee different ways to be the Protectors of our city if that's what they're truly interested in. I think the type of police perform Chief Zack is describing would should yep. Sell it by another group of social workers of social workers potentially people in the community and Economic Development Division or the equity and inclusion divisions police that are interested in making a community safe and healthy should consider what their badge stands for. It creates fear for lots of the people. They want to help even if they believe differently if they really want to help our community. They should be willing to let go of the idea of themselves as officers and consider themselves as community members and social workers. Thank you.

My name is William Drew and I'm a citizen of Asheville. My comments include that we don't want police involvement in Outreach to communities struggling with homelessness and mental illness. We own now. So think that it's appalling of actions taken by Chief of Police David Zack with the destruction of the medical tent a few weeks ago the defense of white supremacist to deface the mural that was allowed by the city and all around everything else. He's doing police fire this ma'am.

Hi, my name is Claire Solomon and I live in Ashville. I'm calling to urge you to define the actual police department and reallocate the budget to community programs as outlined by black Asheville demands stomach racism in our city is catastrophic Asheville City schools has the fifth largest racial opportunity Gap in the entire country the median income for a black house home in Asheville is over \$10,000 less than a white household as city leaders prioritize unsustainable tourism and gentrification over local residents black people have been driven out of their homes and businesses. We have an affordable housing crisis in terms of policing black drivers and Asheville are three times more likely than white drivers to be searched by police and traffic stops dead and although black residents account for only 12% of the City's population. They account for \$33 40% of arrests for low-level crimes APV is clearly in effect wage. As a crime rates continue to rise in our city the brutal beating and choking of Johnny rush and the murder of Jerry Williams attest to a PDS dangerous and competence Chiefs x 36 month plan is not nearly enough the city needs to be fund APD in accordance with the demands of local black leadership money that is currently spent on the police needs to be invested in services for mental health domestic violence addiction homelessness schools hospitals and food security research has proven that investing in Social Services significantly decreases crime, for example, database shows that Finland is one of the world's safest countries and has the lowest police per capita ratio in the industrialized world as a Nashville native public school teacher and someone who cares deeply about our flawed but beautiful city. I refuse to sit back while our black community are treated as second-class Citizens, I urge you to make decisions that will bring Equity to Black Asheville and as a final note, I want jobExpress my concern and disappointment the armed white supremacists were allowed to harass protesters at a black lives matter event downtown on June 21st, photographs show at least two semi-automatic rifles along with various handguns. The police were on scene and did nothing to stop this the law clearly states that it is illegal to have a weapon at a demonstration again, this shows the utter disregard page residence that is endemic in the APD. This is a public safety issue that we need addressed immediately. Thank you for listening.

Hello, my name is Elijah Higgins. I live in North Asheville. I would like to comment about the wage and specifically cheats tax \$36 a day plan. I don't think that the police need to be involved so directly with community outreach to help the homelessness problem to help homeless people or people with mental illness or drug addictions. Um, I don't think that the police are qualified to help in those situations, especially because I personally have experienced how quickly they are trained to react most of the time violently. As we've seen by then just drawing the city section medic tent at a peaceful protest or shooting off tear gas peaceful protest wage. The big issue is that the APD is just too quick to resort to violence and as we've seen in in their defense of like white supremacists with guns and automatic rifles downtown like what they're saying and what they're doing. Does it seem to match up and we just need overall less police involvement. They are not the answer to every problem the city has and there are plenty of older people who are trained in helping people with mental illness. They're trained in helping homeless people and we need to be uplifting goes. Yep. Cool, and not the police. They don't have all the answers. Thank you so much for listening. I hope that you continue to listen to the voice of the people in the city. We all really care about the city of Asheville, and we wanted to prosper as you community and not wage a police governed city. Thank you. Bye.

Hello, my name is Charisa. I am a resident of West Asheville. I am calling for a public safety comment. This is mainly for cheap Zach. Actually, that's for all of city council as well. I hope you sincerely apologize for the disaster of a team that you are running in the APD. The unhinged hatred the forest the brutality that they have shown towards the citizens of the city that they are supposed to be protecting it runs deep. Um, you are not fully to blame, but you also have not done a sincere or sincere apology or openly condemn the actions of the APD you aided in destroying the medic tent firing military grade weapons into innocent and peaceful protest and you have not been present the show me solidarity that you Jeeps at and the mayor Mannheim put on at the Saturday March for black lives. A few weeks ago was against just a show and it was just that wage. We see that I hope you understand that the calls for your resignation and that of YouTube may or may and Hammer are not going to stop for either of you. It's a disgrace that we are here having to fight so hard for six people and our police force to do the right thing while there are white supremacists talking to the APD and open at a protest in a park carrying weapons where the APD should know that they are violating citable laws and either r a p d is too stupid to know what the actual laws are and that is dangerous enough as it is or they are protecting wage see and do you know what it means if the APD is protecting white supremacist, the APD are white supremacists. The APT does not serve our community or a public safety they serve for a rotting infrastructure of racism and it is crumbling. I hope you act accordingly and condemn the actions of the APD with the medication and they're handling of the white known white supremacist downtown. I urge you to make an open statement apologizing for Thursday. At the very least Public Safety is not run by the APD. I hope that you reflect that in your decisions to amend the budget. Thank you for your time.

Hello, my name is Hannah normal, and I'm a citizen of Asheville. I'm calling regarding the public safety committee meeting tomorrow on June 25th. And I have a few things like to voice first is police violence against peaceful protesters must cease immediately APD needs to be held accountable. There is also a city statute against Open Carry at a protest for no reason she remembers of white supremacist groups be able to carry rapid-fire guns at any time and especially during peaceful protesting the APD allows volatile behavior from and panders to white supremacist. The APD must be held accountable for the month and the city needs to acknowledge the presence of white supremacist groups and bind their ability to intimidate and threaten the Firepower protesters and they're being treated violently by police while these white supremacists are treated kindly kindly and peacefully by APD and this must cease. Defund the APD immediately and invest in Black communities 50% of the apd's budget needs to be invested in long-term safety strategies, including supporting black startups offices and eliminating the racial opportunity Gap in Asheville City Schools. It is vital to direct money away from the APD and into the funds that Target the problems with safety with public safety and health of our communities overall well-being 50 for your time.

Hi, my name is Rebecca Gibney and I am a citizen of Asheville North Carolina. And I'm calling regarding the public safety committee meeting tomorrow, June 25th. And I have a few things. I would like to voice, um about wage some things. I would like covered and changed first being police violence against peaceful protesters. I feel pretty strongly that that should cease it seems pretty crazy and like a bomb is waste of money. Number two. There's a city statute against Open Carry at a protest for for no reason should members of white supremacist groups be allowed to carry rapid-fire guns at any time and especially during peaceful protests. Number three, the APD allows volatile behavior from and patterns to White supremacists. And there is unfortunate just tons and tons of videos of this and the APD mom be held accountable for this and the city needs to acknowledge the presence of white supremacist groups and buying their ability to intimidate and threatened with Firepower. There's m p o c or being treated violently Bob. Please while these white supremacists are treated kindly and peacefully and this must cease for defund the APD immediately and invest in Black communities 50% of the apd's budget needs to be invested in a long-term safety strategies, including supporting black startups and businesses and eliminating the racial opportunity Gap and Asheville City Schools. It is vital to direct money away from the APD and into the funds Target the problems with Public Safety and help promote our communities overall well-being. I really appreciate you setting us up to be able to hear our voices and do here. Hope that you do really hear our voices. Thank you so much.

Hi, my name is Molly clay. I'm a resident of Asheville and I'm calling to make a comment in regards to the public safety meeting tomorrow. It is clear according to your agenda that the majority of the public safety discussion involves the actual police department, even though it has been proven that they are not protecting the people of this city. Especially black community members. This is Resa exemplified by KKK members showing up to Peaceful protests with AR-15s antagonizing peaceful protesters while the police stood by me. Only watched and refused to do anything about it, but arrested to protesters for the failure to evacuate the mural. This is very telling on the police's stamps for our home on our demand for for racial Justice and we will be continuing to keep a very close eye on this Behavior. Therefore we are demanding that fifty percent of the actual police department budget be used to reinvest and under resource black communities in alternative Public Safety sectors. We are demanding. Work in collaboration with black community members to decide where reallocated funds should go. It's been proven that poverty and unemployment cause crime there for our Focus needs to be on divesting from the police department and reinvesting a new Public Safety sector. Like I said, we won't be continuing to keep a very close eye on you all and I hope that you're able to sincerely take into account this message. Thank you.

Hi, my name is Jeffrey. I am calling in regards to the proposition of having Asheville police involved with homeless and Mental Health Resources. The answer is absolutely not are you out of your mind off after the way that they've treated people the war crimes they've committed on the citizens of Asheville the fact that they have been seen openly working with the KKK in proud boys. There's photos and videos of this wage. In fact that the police chief as well as other police were laughing and a black woman who was murdered know not only should not be involved with homeless people. They need to be defunded and they need to be abolished and you need to replace them with pigs actually have the escalation skills and even a semblance of cognitive capacity beyond that child. Oh and one more thing before before I even get to that like, They literally locked out the homeless people when you put in that b\*\*\*\*\* curfew. So no no under no circumstances. Should you have the police in any capacity just moved with homeless people would people struggle with mental illness. In fact, they should be stripped on their jobs. They should be fired. You should post an investigation into their time with white supremacist groups the fact that they were openly worked with them in the fact that they literally spoke to one of the head Klan members Joshua case. Yes, Joshua case took his video and photo evidence of them communicating together and then pretending that they were armed no, no. No, do you need the defendant abolish the actual police department completely they've got to go through the whole thing.

Hello, my name is James Donahue and I am a Nashville resident and taxpayer. Um, I'm calling to urge the city council to find the Asheville Police Department by at least 50% and redistribute those funds to Social Services wage. I'm also calling to urge city council to ban the use of tear gas and rubber bullets and or pepper bullets off in the city of Asheville. I'm also calling to address my concern over armed white demonstrators during the protests counter-protests. Um that seemed to be witnessed by the police department the Asheville Police Department those things seriously concerning and would like to see immediate action taking place. Thank you.