



CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT OF POLICE COMMUNITY MEETING

March 24, 2021

<https://www.somervillema.gov/civilianoversight>

For our attendees participating virtually who would like to access this meeting in a language other than English, please follow these instructions:

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- We recognize that your language may not be available tonight, and for that we apologize. Follow up with us at civilianoversight@somervillema.gov so we may do better in the future.

Agenda



Actively Listen

- Ayerim Decena (City Council Legislative & Policy Analyst)
- Community Presenters



Reflect

Engage

- civilianoversight@somervillema.gov
- Sign up to attend a smaller-group discussion:
 - Email CivilianOversight@somervilleMA.gov
- Send written comments to CityCouncil@SomervilleMA.gov



Common Goals of Civilian Oversight



Improve public trust



Ensure accessible complaint process



Increase transparency



Promote thorough and fair investigations



Deter police misconduct



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Reimagining Policing in Somerville

In recent years, the City Council has undertaken multiple initiatives related to policing and public safety, including:

- “Welcoming City” Ordinance
- Surveillance Oversight & Face Recognition Ban
- Overhauling the confirmation process
- Formally rescinding outdated “gang ordinance”

In 2020, following widespread protests and advocacy, the City Council and Mayor’s Office committed to additional reforms, including:

- Re-invested ~7.7% of proposed FY21 SPD budget to other social services
- “Re-imagining police” process: creating a non-police response to non-violent emergencies
- **Establish Civilian Oversight of Police**
- *More info: <https://www.somervillema.gov/policereform>*

Somerville residents overwhelmingly support Civilian Oversight of Police



How Residents View Policing in Somerville

SURVEY REPORT

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“Somerville residents are overwhelmingly in favor of establishing a Civilian Review Board to oversee the Somerville Police Department. **81% of Somerville residents support establishing such a board** and just 6% oppose it; 13% were not sure.”

Tufts University survey of 618 randomly-selected Somerville residents, Oct-Nov 2020

https://tischcollege.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/Somerville_policing_report.pdf

Civilian Oversight can mean different things in different communities



The National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE):

There are over 150 Civilian Oversight agencies in the country, including four in Massachusetts.

What these oversight agencies have in common:

“Community-member based review boards where complainants are given a place to voice concerns outside of the law enforcement agency.”

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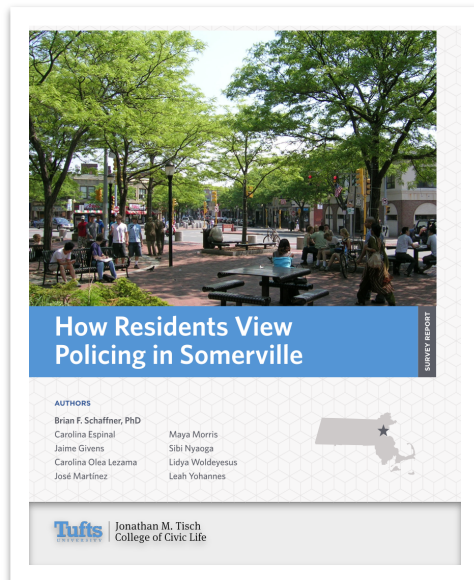
Promote thorough and fair investigations



Deter police misconduct

Today, complaints and allegations about Somerville Police are investigated by SPD

“More than two-thirds of Somerville residents indicated that the Civilian Review Board should have **the power to investigate ‘allegations of excessive force and abuse’** as well as any police shootings.”



*Tufts University survey of 618 randomly-selected
Somerville residents, Oct-Nov 2020*

https://tischcollege.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/Somerville_policing_report.pdf

There are four basic models of Civilian Oversight:



- Review-Focused models
- Investigative Models
- Auditor/Monitor Models
- Hybrid Models

The City Council wants to know what YOU want to see in a Civilian Oversight Agency in Somerville.

Review-Focused Models

Individual board that is authorized to *review* completed internal affairs investigations.

- Led by community members
- Typically rely on police investigations
- Receive complaints directly from community
- Issue agreement or disagreement with internal affairs findings

Cities with Review-Focused Committees:



Investigative Models

Independent board that conducts investigations into community complaints and internal affairs investigations.

- Conduct own investigations led by professional investigators
- May receive complaints directly from community
- Scope of authority is wide
- Can recommend disciplinary actions to police department



Auditor/Monitor Models

Boards with ongoing monitoring or auditing authority over the police department.

- May receive complaints directly from community
- Focus on large-scale systemic reform
- May investigate internal police complaints/files
- Analyzes trends and patterns of police conduct



Hybrid Models

Focus is on an oversight agency that works best for an individual community.

- Combine aspects of other models
- Structure derived from desired authority and function
- Considers social, cultural, economic, and political uniqueness of community



Civilian Oversight Models:



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- Investigative Models
- Auditor/Monitor Models
- Hybrid Models

The City Council wants to know what YOU want to see in a Civilian Oversight Agency in Somerville.

Please fill out this [survey](#) to provide your thoughts on Civilian Oversight in Somerville and check out the Somerville [website](#) for more information!

Why is diverse community engagement so important for Community Oversight?

Community Input & Participation

- ❖ Community members play a role in oversight: serving on the board/commission, holding City accountable, helping shape the process.
- ❖ Can lead to new, collaborative strategies for public safety
- ❖ This type of agency only works with active on-going participation from the diverse members of our community.



Please fill out this [survey](#) to provide your thoughts on Civilian Oversight in Somerville and check out the Somerville [website](#) for more information!

Outline of tonight's meeting

- Presentation: What is Civilian Oversight of Police?
- Community Panel
- Next steps: How to get involved
 - Sign up to attend a smaller-group discussion:
 - Email CivilianOversight@somervilleMA.gov
 - Take our online survey: www.SomervilleMA.gov/CivilianOversight
 - Send written comments to CityCouncil@SomervilleMA.gov

Community Speaks

- Reflect

Engage



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