

OPEN LETTER TO THE MAYOR, BOARD OF ALDERMEN, AND CITY OF NASHUA

RE: R-21-143- Proposing an Amendment to the City Charter Relative to the Manner of Appointments to the Nashua Board of Police Commissioners

It is with great disappointment that we even feel the need to pen this letter, but we feel the time has come to express our position publicly.

For those who do not know, there is an effort underway to substantially change the Nashua Police Commission. It recently has appeared as both a resolution in front of the Board of Aldermen, as well as a public petition to add a referendum to the City ballot this November.

There has been much controversy regarding the subject resolution and the citizens of Nashua have not had the opportunity to discuss and properly understand its ramifications and nuances.

This is not a stop sign, nor overnight parking; both issues which were studied far more carefully than this one before their implementation.

This change has potential far reaching & long- lasting ramifications to our city. It cannot be treated as political football... it is a BUSINESS decision. It is a decision that will impact the people of Nashua in ways that we need to understand. As business leaders and community leaders we feel it's time we weighed in with our thoughts.

First, the resolution itself was crafted and released for public view in May, just as we were finding our first bit of relief from the pandemic. It was an emotional period and most folks were, and continue to be, justifiably distracted. It is a time when people started to travel and are focused on reconnecting with loved ones and activities post-pandemic.

There was one Special Board of Aldermen meeting held on June 7, which most Nashuans never even knew was occurring, to initially discuss the resolution. Even at this meeting there were strongly opposing positions voiced, and information prompting further review was presented to the Board.

On July 6, a Special Board of Aldermen/Personnel Subcommittee meeting was held and, at that meeting, after more discussion, the board UNANIMOUSLY voted to table the resolution and create a study committee to explore all the potential impacts carefully... this even included the original proponents of the resolution.

However, even after this meeting, the Mayor himself, as well as some of his supporters, have been going door to door and outside local spots like the Nashua landfill and Greeley Park attempting to get a petition signed to put the resolution on the ballot this November, a few short months from now! This action was clearly in opposition to the direction of the Personnel Subcommittee; and definitely too quick to create a study committee and properly dissect the underlying impacts of passing this resolution. The Mayor declined to participate in the study committee, and the effort to put this on the low voter turnout, off-year November ballot continues.

The Police Department and several aldermen have also called for public discussion of the issue as the appropriate method to understand the issue and its potential impact.

So, as leaders in the business community and the greater community, we request the following:

- Withdraw the current petition and re-write the resolution to instead involve the creation of a formal study committee
- Create the study committee to include aldermen, police, and both community & business leaders

- Organize moderated community discussions/town halls involving both sides and open dialogue
- Give this process enough time to work and move a decision this impactful to the major election in 2023; clearly it is too big for a midterm election only a few months away
- Take the time to allow all citizens to make an INFORMED decision
- Items to explore should include, but not be limited to:
 - o Impact on the autonomy of the Police Department in investigations involving city hall (there is prior history with illegal activity in city hall that resulted in the conviction and imprisonment of previous aldermen)
 - o Impact on the autonomy of the Police Department in hiring and promotion decisions
 - o Impact on the police budget and expenditures such as additional patrol downtown if the new organization is implemented
 - o Impact to police manpower and its effect on response time
 - o Impact to divisions within the Police Department that would be eliminated or downsized
 - o Impact on downtown businesses, including those with outdoor dining
 - o Impact on Nashua's CALEA certification and related issues
 - o Impact on potential increase in civil unrest & gang activity
 - o Impact on real estate values
 - o Impact of increasing Police Commission from 3 to 5 persons, including the ability to reach consensus to operate
 - o Impact on recent cities of similar size that implemented this change within the last ten years
- The study committee must also address the "necessity" of this proposed change as required by the city charter in RSA 49-B:5.

We respectfully request that you consider this approach, slow down, and make an informed and proper decision for the City of Nashua as outlined above.

For those citizens who do not view this issue as a business decision, or who are not business owners, please consider the potential impact on your property

values and to local businesses that you support.

We also feel it is our civic duty to also offer our support in any of the above actions, as needed and requested.

Respectfully,

Sandra Cleary, SLC Group Holdings

Rob Parsons, Parsons Ventures

David Roedel, Roedel Companies

Linda Lovering, Lovering Volvo

Jack Tulley, Tulley Automotive Group

Kurt Mathias, Boston Billiard Club & Casino

Victor Bazzani, DC, Bazzani Chiropractic, and Bazzani Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

Michael Geha, President, NHPA

Chief Tim Hefferan, Retired, Nashua Police Department

Chief Andrew Lavoie, Retired, Nashua Police Department

Captain Kerry Ann Baxter, Retired, Nashua Police Department

Ed Lecius, Retired, NPD Community Policing Coordinator

Bernie Streeter, Former Nashua Mayor

Gary Lambert, Nashua Fire Commission

Lori Lambert, Concerned Citizen

Brad Kreick, Concerned Citizen

Paula Johnson, former Nashua Alderman

David Schoneman, Former Nashua Alderman
Carl Seidel, Former NH Representative
Di Lothrop, former fundraising manager, health care
Charles Lothrop, Digital Media Specialist
Charles Hall, Concerned Citizen
Jeanne Bausha, Concerned Citizen
Bennie Bausha, Concerned Citizen
Kurt Martin, Realtor
Valerie Martin, Concerned Citizen
Catherine Ackerman, Concerned Citizen
Tom Dionne, Concerned Citizen
Barbara Kelson, Concerned Citizen
Chris Buda, Concerned Citizen
Allisan Dyer, Concerned Citizen
Michael Dyer, Concerned Citizen
Marie Muller, Concerned Citizen
Ed Muller, Retired Math Teacher
Michael O'Connor, Concerned Citizen
Kathleen O'Connor, Author
Laurie Ortolano, Concerned Citizen
Michael Ortolano, Concerned Citizen
Donald Scott, Accountant
Colleen Ward-Concerned Citizen
Frank Thibodeau, Concerned Citizen
James Tullis, Concerned Citizen

Lillian Tullis, Concerned Citizen

Cheryl Walley, Concerned Citizen