



GMNC Monthly Meeting
August 3, 2020 6:30-8:00 pm
Online Meeting via zoom

Meeting Minutes

I. Council Members Present

Fatima Ali-Salaam, Chair
Janae Tooley, Vice Chair
David Halbert
Lenore Perreira
Ruby James Saucer
William King
Matthew Skelly, Secretary
June Joseph
Nicole Purvis
Nikkia Jean-Charles
Joy Gary

II. Meeting minutes from July 7, 2020

Motion to approve – Purvis
Seconded – Beckford Brewington
Minutes approved unanimously

III. Presenter: Rachael Rollins, Suffolk County DA

- 19 months in from taking office – they have held four town halls over the course of the first year – Roxbury, Chelsea, Winthrop, and on 12/11 at the Mattapan BPL.
- Goals have been to think differently about how to spend her money. They have a budget of \$23 million dollars and they want to spend it hiring people who represent Suffolk County. People who live in Boston, Winthrop, Chelsea, and Revere.
- As a candidate Rollins listed 15 different crimes that she wanted to try change the focus away from jail time and look more at the root cause. Crimes that stem from substance abuse or mental health issues. People in those situations need care that they can't get at the Suffolk County House of Corrections. It costs \$55,000 per year to house someone there, where there's a ratio of 2-3 guards per inmate (compare that to 20-30 students per teacher in schools).
- We've already hit 40 homicides this year, there were only 40 homicides all of last year, which was an all-time low.
- Rollins' office created a task force with the gang unit, narcotics unit, and juvenile unit to collaborate between the three groups and coordinate with homicide to make sure everyone is working together. This group works with the BPD BRIC to figure out who the top 40 individuals are who are driving crime in Boston – maybe as much as 40-50% of all crime in Boston. They go through a review of their probation to figure out and make sure the people who are the most dangerous are getting the most attention. For people on the list, whether they're in school or whatever else, Rollins considers it part of her job to make sure they're living a good life and doing what they're supposed to.

- Mattapan has experienced a lot of homicide over the past year, which is really awful. So when Rollins has to decide whether to devote her resources to looking into a trespassing issue or trying to work on homicides, she's going to try and devote her resources to homicides. So she's using her discretion on some items, but when the community and the police are using their discretion first, the DA's office does not need to.
- During COVID-19, crime is often exacerbated by pressure. We've all been under extreme pressure over the past 5 months. Many essential workers who also have to home school their children. The gaps that we have in our system for underperforming schools are widening. Child abuse reports are down, and we know that's not true. 20% of the kids in BPS haven't even logged on to their chromebooks at all. Evictions are also an issue contributing to the pressure, all of which make crime make more prevalent right now.
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Q: How can we come out of COVID and into a new normal?

A: Typically when someone makes it into the DA's system, they've been brought into the system through some other means like the police, other than if the DA's office goes through a grand jury. When those people get brought into the system, that's when the DA's office can start deploying their resources to help. The DA's office shows up to many different courts every day. Half of her staff are lawyers, but she's got a lot of other professionals in her office (350 total employees). The DA's office also gives out contracts, which Rollins is focused on giving out to the communities that sometimes experience negative outcomes from her office. Rollins office can also help by writing a letter – sometimes people who have been hurt by crime may need assistance with housing or other issues, and the DA's office can help with that.

Q: Does the DA's office have local offices and relationships with groups in our community?

A: Yes, the DA's office has excellent relationships all over the county. Especially with the public schools, bringing in young artists to the DA's office to get the right type of tone in the office. Danielle Drummond, Deputy Chief of Community Engagement: DA Rollins' office held a rollout event at Chez Vouz where hundreds of children from the community attended. Dummond also has a ton of family in Mattapan, and is part of the community. The DA used to give out grants of about \$75K, but DA Rollins upped that amount to \$100K and has given money to 21 different small, grassroots organizations interested in doing food things in their community. RR: Rollins' daughter is one of the best hurdlers in the country, so she's been at the Reggie Lewis Center many times. One time behind the stands she noticed an old woodworking shop that seems to be out of service. It seems like it would be great to get that in use to get people learning skills when they're younger.

Q: How do teens get involved in your office?

A: They sometimes do come in and do a job shadow, Rollins is always happy to invite them in, and they also have a lot of interns. DD: The office also runs outreach programs to teens and younger kids. RR: Back in 2013 you used to be able to be charged with a crime when you were as young as 7, now the minimum age is 12. What's the way to cut off juveniles vs adults? Turn it around Charlestown is another program where they get youth involved. There are always opportunities to set up classes at any specific schools if that's useful.

Q: Ms. Annie Kincaid passed away earlier this week, but in the 70s she came up with the Colorado Street neighborhood patrol, and started community barbecues, and now the Colorado Street Neighborhood Association is the longest running active neighborhood association in the City. The GMNC is trying to get information out relating to equity, and these are all our children.

A: DD: When crime happens in an area, it's really important for the DA's office to mobilize and bring everyone to the table for their voices to be heard. RR: Rep Holmes and Ricardo Arroyo are also recognized for joining us.

Q: What would the abolition of BRIC do to the DA's office? Traditionally BRIC has profiled and targeted communities of color, including ICE attempting to deport someone. How would that affect your office?

A: ICE went into BRIC and made a decision to try and deport a student. Very shortly after DA Rollins was sworn in, ICE grabbed up someone who had shown up in court, and now MA is the first community in the country that ICE can't come into courthouses. It used to be that Schools, Churches, Courthouses, Hospitals were off limits to arresting people. BRIC does come up with some good intelligence, but we see that POC are stopped by police at a rate twice as high as their ratio of the population. That's not okay. All police and DA practices should be transparent. Most importantly, ICE should not be able to dig deep into local law enforcement data.

Q: Are there still grants available for youth and artists? In the BLM movement there has been a major gap in help for black trans queer people and black trans women, do you have any strategy for helping those people?

A: It's a really tough problem, and we're doing our best to get help to that community. Many different communities of color need help in this process, including Breonna Taylor. No knock warrants are really problematic. And not nearly enough people are talking about black trans communities. DD: Kara Hayes is the office's liaison to LGBTQ communities. RR: Implicit bias training is for everyone! We all have work to do, we all need to keep learning and do better, even if it is uncomfortable. We all need to get more comfortable with being uncomfortable.

Q: How does your office engage BPS? Black and Brown children, especially our sons, are often punished more harshly than their white counterparts. What are you doing to engage BPS?

A: BPD carries a lot of the weight of dealing directly with BPS. There's already a link with the legislature, they're finding it suspect when school resource officers are making arrests in schools. The DA's office is now asking for data with regard to police dealing with students. When Rollins graduated from high school there were no metal detectors and officers, and if there were many of her classmates might've been arrested. Ultimately we find crime where we send police – there may be crime elsewhere but we don't know about it as much. BPD Officer Cynthia Beckford Brewington: Clearing up a question about why police are always in front of certain schools – they're really just there primarily to control traffic, which is requested by the community. DD: We also have people coordinating making sure kids know what resources are available to them, and they're accessing them when they need them. We have case managers who are out delivering PPE, making sure kids have enough food and supplies, making sure kids are going to their therapy sessions, and that they have everything they need to survive and to thrive.

VI. Committee Reports

1. Public Services – Report from Committee Co-Chair Matthew Skelly: Cummins Highway Pilot, AARP on August 4
2. Zoning Committee – Report from Council Chair Fatima Ali-Salaam: The zoning committee will be hearing applications for projects on Babson Street and Orlando Street, they will also be picking

V – Wrap Up Announcements

- Roudnie Celestin – City Hall is now open Tuesdays, Thursday, and Fridays 9-4. Call 311 ahead of time to see if the dept is running appt only. Working really hard trying to figure out how BPS is going to reopen – whether it's all remote or hybrid. We're still offering veterans services or struggling in recovery. Whether people need a new placard or anything like that. We're not ticketing again for street sweeping starting August 10. The ticket is up to \$90 this year, so keep a heads up! For the

upcoming elections, you're able to mail the ballot in, but you need to send your request for the mail in ballot by August 26 for the primary and by October 23 for the general election. You can now get tested without symptoms, paying or appointments. Roudnie will post all the info on the GMNC facebook page.

- Kenya Beamon – Community engagement manager for the BPDA – this Wednesday 8/5 will be the next PLAN Mattapan meeting expanding on the last “Corridors” meeting. Information on how to register is all on the GMNC website.
- Judnise Guillet from Councilor Arroyo's office is available if anyone has any concerns.
- Aisha Miller from ISD – working on an issue with the ZBA. If you have any questions about the ZBA please reach out to her.