

Senate Republicans hold up Massachusetts police bill for third day

Michael P. Norton and Chris Van Buskirk
State House News Service

For the third time in as many days, Senate Republicans prevented debate on a wide-ranging police reform bill, but it appears the Senate could launch into its debate on Monday. Sen. Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) used a procedural motion to postpone debate – asking that all of the nearly 130 amendments to the bill (S 2800) be printed in the Senate calendar.

Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester) said there is bipartisan agreement on 80-90 percent of the bill, but a section dealing with qualified immunity of law enforcement officers is dividing the Senate. He said a bill that's less expansive and focuses on areas of agreement is more likely to yield "timely action."

Qualified immunity is a doctrine that prohibits civil rights suits against government officials where unconstitutional conduct had not been clearly established as illegal at the time it occurred.

"Our language is fine. It is solid," Sen. William Brownsberger (D-Belmont) said on the floor. "It's just complicated enough that people get confused about it."

While he said senators would use the rest of the weekend to continue talking through the qualified immunity issue, Brownsberger added, "Delay is the enemy of success here." Participating in the session by phone, Sen. Jo Comerford (D-Northampton) said senators need to act in response to widespread anger over police brutality. "We must not delay the

work on this bill anymore," she said. House leaders have not unveiled their plan.

The Senate will revisit its bill Monday at 11 a.m.

Markey, Kennedy take campaigns into Boston jail

By Matt Murphy

State House News Service

One inmate in the Suffolk County House of Correction wanted to know how U.S. Sen. Edward Markey would help former prisoners find reliable transportation to keep appointments with their parole officers.

Another questioned the senator about his position on reparations for slavery.

And yet another asked U.S. Rep. Joseph Kennedy what he would do if elected to lower the rate of recidivism.

The two Democrats running for U.S. Senate stood before a room of masked inmates in the Suffolk County House of Correction on Tuesday to answer their questions about everything from systemic racism in the criminal justice system to climate change and the Supreme Court's recent ruling on immigration.

Invited by Suffolk County Sheriff Steve Tompkins, each candidate had over an hour to respond and share their thoughts on how to reform a system that both agreed puts too many people behind bars, and doesn't do enough to help people before or after they're incarcerated. The discussion was moderated by Tompkins, who has endorsed Kennedy in the race.

“We are an over-incarcerated society. We have too many people behind bars who shouldn’t be there,” Markey said.

The first-term senator, who is seeking six more years after a long career in Washington, said he and U.S. Rep. Ayanna Pressley had sponsored legislation to make public transit free for people to get to work and appointments, and said he signed on to a Sen. Cory Booker resolution to create a commission to investigate reparations.

And Kennedy blamed Republicans for the stalemate over immigration reform, suggesting that during his early years in Congress there were enough votes for comprehensive reform that would have protected the so-called Dreamers brought to the United States as minors by their parents without documentation.

Republican leaders, Kennedy said, refused to put the bill on the floor for a vote.

“If Mitch McConnell won’t do it, then you have to go out there and make sure Mitch McConnell’s not calling the shots,” Kennedy said, returning to the case for his candidacy that he’s better suited to campaigning for Democrats around the country to flip control of the Senate.

On the issues, however, there wasn’t a lot of daylight between Markey and Kennedy, who both talked about the importance of reaching people with mental health and substance use disorders before they break the law and end up in jail.

Markey discussed with one inmate his support for ending qualified immunity for police officers, and frequently mentioned Booker, a Black senator from New Jersey, as someone he has worked with to sponsor legislation like the Next Step Act, to overhaul sentencing, police tactics and training, and reentry programming.

The two Democrats also agreed with one inmate who said housing

is an issue for people returning to the community from prison who often have no choice but to return to the violent neighborhoods and lifestyles that got them in trouble in the first place.

Markey said that to solve the problems of social justice in the court and prison systems the government has to provide more funding for housing that's affordable and mental health services.

"A vision without funding is a hallucination," Markey said.

Kennedy also said the federal government needs to look at the minimum wage and tipped wage laws nationwide to make it easier for people to provide for their families and hold on to the housing they have.

"Let's make sure fewer people come into jails and prisons in the first place," Kennedy told the inmates about his approach to recidivism and rehabilitation.

Kennedy has criticized Markey during the campaign for his vote for the 1994 crime bill signed by President Bill Clinton that has been blamed for the disproportionate incarceration of people of color through mandatory sentencing for drug crimes and other offenses.

Markey, in turn, has questioned Kennedy's decision to work for conservative Republican District Attorney Michael O'Keefe on Cape Cod after Harvard University law school.

Kennedy and Markey both said the system of mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines must be revisited.

"It's been real successful at putting people in jail. It has not been successful at all in mitigating the impact of drugs on our streets. And that needs to change," Kennedy said.

Voters decide the Democratic contest between Kennedy and Markey on Sept. 1, and Tompkins called it "asininely stupid"

that people with felony convictions cannot vote. The prohibition was approved by voters in 2000, by a two to one margin, as part of a constitutional amendment.

But even though some inmates might not be able to vote for either candidates, Markey and Kennedy said their voices are valuable.

“We have to think of you as part of a larger family,” Markey said. “You won’t be here forever. But you’ll be part of our community forever.”

New Bedford one of eight Massachusetts cities to offer free COVID-19 testing

Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the launch of free COVID-19 testing sites in eight communities from July 10 to August 14 to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

The New Bedford free testing details:

New Bedford

Day	Testing Location	Contact	Testing Hours	Details	Staff Language Capability
Monday	Greater New Bedford Community Health Center: 874 Purchase St.	(508) 742-3807	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Walk-up or by appointment	All languages
	Morton Avenue/ Satellite Village	(774) 285-4499	1–5 p.m.	Walk-up or by appointment	English, Spanish, Portuguese
Tuesday	Greater New Bedford Community Health Center: 874 Purchase St.	(508) 742-3807	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Walk-up or by appointment	All languages
	Kilburn Street Clinic	(774) 285-4499	9 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Walk-up or by appointment	English, Spanish, Portuguese
	Wind Street/Moore's Court	(774) 285-4499	1–4 p.m.	Walk-up or by appointment	English, Spanish, Portuguese
Wednesday	Greater New Bedford Community Health Center: 874 Purchase St.	(508) 742-3807	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Walk-up or by appointment	All languages
	360 Coggeshall St. (PAACA)	(774) 285-4499	11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Walk-up or by appointment	English, Spanish, Portuguese
	Temple Park- United Front Housing	(774) 285-4499	2–5 p.m.	Walk-up or by appointment	English, Spanish, Portuguese
Thursday	Greater New Bedford Community Health Center: 874 Purchase St.	(508) 742-3807	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Walk-up or by appointment	All languages
	Gifford Street, Wellness Center	(774) 285-4499	9 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Walk-up or by appointment	English, Spanish, Portuguese
Friday	Greater New Bedford Community Health Center: 874 Purchase St.	(508) 742-3807	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Walk-up or by appointment	All languages
	International Park – 240 Sawyer St.	(774) 285-4499	2–6 p.m.	Walk-up or by appointment	English, Spanish, Portuguese
Saturday	Greater New Bedford Community Health Center: 874 Purchase St.	(508) 992-6553	8 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Walk-up or by appointment	All languages

This “Stop the Spread” initiative is a data-driven effort to reduce the prevalence of COVID-19 in communities that are above the state average in total cases and positive test rate, and have experienced a decline in testing levels since April. The initiative is being launched in Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Marlborough, and New Bedford. Residents of these communities are urged to take advantage of the availability of these new testing sites, even if they are asymptomatic. While these sites are being launched in these communities, they are open to all residents of the Commonwealth.

“While the Commonwealth has made progress on reducing the overall positive test rate, there are still communities where the number of positive tests is above the average of the rest of the state,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “Focusing our efforts to increase testing in these communities will help identify new cases and stop the spread. Residents of these communities, even those who are asymptomatic, are urged to take advantage of these new sites.”

“This initiative will provide widespread testing in easy to access community locations,” said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. “If you live in these communities, please get tested to protect your family, loved ones and neighbors from COVID-19.”

“Increased testing within these communities will help to identify new cases of COVID-19 and break the chains of community transmission,” said COVID-19 Command Center Director & Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders. “As we move into the summer, we will continue to closely monitor positivity and testing rates across the Commonwealth.”

The population of the cities in which the free testing will be conducted – Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Marlborough, and New Bedford – make up approximately 9% of the Commonwealth’s population, but have seen 27% of the

Commonwealth's positive tests in the last two weeks.

The statewide positive test rate over the past two weeks is approximately 2%, but in these eight communities, 8% of tests have been positive.

Despite the continued elevated spread in these communities, total testing in these communities has declined 39% since the end of April, and the total cases as a percentage of population for these communities is nearly double the state average.

Residents may visit mass.gov/stopthespread to find testing locations.

Residents are reminded that if they test positive for COVID-19, please answer the call when they are contacted by the Community Tracing Collaborative or their local board of health. Also, any individual who needs a safe place to isolate can call (617) 367-5150 to access an isolation and recovery site at no cost.

New Law Sets in Motion Mail-In, Early Voting Options in Massachusetts

Chris Lisinski
State House News Service

A dramatic expansion of mail-in and early voting in Massachusetts is now law, and Secretary of State William Galvin is now preparing to quickly mail applications to all 4.5 million of the state's registered voters by a deadline

next week.

Galvin announced late Monday afternoon that Gov. Charlie Baker signed into law the reforms drafted during the pandemic and aimed at ensuring maximum participation while allowing people to choose voting options and minimize their COVID-19 risks. This election season, for the first time in the state's history, all voters who wish to do so will be able to cast a ballot via mail without needing to qualify for an absentee ballot. By July 15, Galvin's office must send applications for mail-in primary election ballots to all voters. His staff will then need to send another round of applications in September for the general election.

The new law also creates the state's first-ever early voting period before a primary election, from Aug. 22 to Aug. 28, and expands general election early voting to run from Oct. 17 to Oct. 30. A six-member legislative conference committee reached a deal last week after both branches passed their own reform bills. The House passed the compromise legislation 157-1, with only Dracut Democratic Rep. Colleen Garry voting against it, while the Senate approved the measure unanimously.

Baker had until Sunday to decide whether to sign, veto or return the bill with an amendment. By signing it Monday, he gave Galvin more than a week to meet the July 15 application-mailing deadline rather than only a few days. Baker had offered few hints about his thinking on the topic. In late May, he questioned the urgency of the issue, arguing that "the elections are a long way away."

Reopening Massachusetts: Governor Baker initiates transition to Phase 3

The Baker-Polito Administration today announced that on July 6th, Phase III of the Commonwealth's reopening plan will begin and updates on gatherings will be in effect. For the City of Boston, Phase III and the gatherings order will take effect on Monday, July 13th.

The Department of Public Health (DPH) also issued updated guidance to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Step One of Phase III:

On May 18, the administration released a four-phased plan to reopen the economy based on public health data, spending at least three weeks in each phase. Key public health data, such as new cases and hospitalizations, have been closely monitored and has seen a decline allowing for Phase III to begin on July 6th. Phase III will begin on July 13th in Boston.

The public health dashboard designating the progress of key COVID-19 data metrics has been updated to reflect the number of COVID-19 patients in Massachusetts hospitals to green, indicating a positive trend.

Since mid-April, the 7-day average for the positive COVID-19 test rate is down 94 percent, the 3-day average of hospitalized patients is down 79 percent and the number of hospitals in surge is down 86 percent.

More than 1,000,000 total COVID-19 tests have been administered, and testing continues throughout the state.

The following businesses will be eligible to reopen in Step One of Phase III, subject to industry-specific rules

concerning capacity and operations:

Movie theaters and outdoor performance venues;
Museums, cultural and historical sites;
Fitness centers and health clubs;
Certain indoor recreational activities with low potential for contact;
Professional sports teams, under the authority of league-wide rules, may hold games without spectators

Full guidance and list of businesses eligible to reopen in Step One of Phase III can be found at www.mass.gov/reopening. Businesses and sectors set to begin opening in Phase III are subject to compliance with all mandatory safety standards.

Revised Gatherings Order:

Under the updated gatherings order, indoor gatherings are limited to eight people per 1,000 square feet, but should not exceed 25 people in a single enclosed, indoor space.

Outdoor gatherings in enclosed spaces are limited to 25 percent of the facility's maximum permitted occupancy, with a maximum of 100 people in a single enclosed outdoor space. This includes community events, civic events, sporting events, concerts, conventions and more. This order does not apply to outdoor, unenclosed gatherings if proper social distancing measures are possible.

This revised order does not supersede previously issued sector guidance, and is effective beginning Monday, July 6. It will be effective Monday, July 13 in the City of Boston.

Public Health Guidance:

In Phase III, health care providers may continue to provide in-person procedures and services as allowed in Phase II, with the addition of certain group treatment programs and day programs. These programs include adult day health, day

habilitation programs, and substance abuse services day treatment and outpatient services. Certain human services programs can reopen including community based day services for adults with intellectual and cognitive disabilities and psychosocial rehabilitation clubhouses.

Health care providers are subject to compliance with all mandatory safety standards, and must continue to utilize prioritization policies established in Phase II for care delivery and scheduling, as well as monitor patient volume for non-essential, elective procedures and services.

In Phase III, visitation guidelines have been updated for 24/7 congregate care facilities and programs overseen by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, including the Departments of Developmental Services, Youth Services, Children and Families, Public Health, Mental Health and the Mass Rehabilitation Commission. Offsite visits, including overnight visits, will be allowed, under specific guidelines. Other updated guidelines, including visitation for long term care facilities, will be released later today. Complete visitation guidance is available at www.mass.gov/hhs/reopening.

MassHealth will also extend its current telehealth flexibility through at least the end of the year to ensure member access to critical health care services and encourage continued adherence to preventative public health precautions.

Judge clears way for DiMasi

to lobby on Beacon Hill

Matt Murphy

State House News Service

Former House Speaker Sal DiMasi was cleared on Thursday to register as a lobbyist by a Superior Court judge who overturned Secretary of State William Galvin's decision to reject DiMasi's application based on his past convictions on federal corruption and extortion charges.

The ruling could return to the State House a man who once wielded tremendous power on Beacon Hill until he was caught and convicted of accepting kickbacks in exchange for steering lucrative state contracts to a Burlington-based software firm.

Superior Court Judge Robert Gordon ruled that if the Legislature had intended to make a conviction on federal criminal charges grounds for automatic disqualification from lobbying in Massachusetts it should have explicitly listed those crimes as triggers for the legal action.

Instead, the 2009 state law cited by Galvin to deny DiMasi's application to lobby only calls for anyone found to be "in violation" of state ethics, lobbying or campaign finance laws to be automatically disqualified from lobbying for 10 years.

Judge Gordon's decision to side with DiMasi's narrow interpretation of the state lobbying laws means that the former North End Democrat may soon be allowed to join the list of former speakers who have gone on to lobbying careers after their years as an elected official were ended by legal trouble.

"We are gratified by today's decision, which adopts our 'common-sense construction' of the Lobbying Law. As we have said from the beginning, the Secretary did not have authority to disqualify Mr. DiMasi from registering as a lobbyist. Mr.

DiMasi looks forward to using his knowledge and experience to advocate for important causes such as healthcare for the homeless and prison reform," said Meredith Fierro, DiMasi's attorney.

Galvin, however, said he intends to appeal. "This decision sets a very bad precedent and I will be appealing it," the secretary said in a short statement.

DiMasi, who led the House from 2004 to 2009, served five years in federal prison until his compassionate release in 2016 to battle cancer. He made a public appeal last year for a "second chance" after his health improved and he sought to restart a career advocating for issues like prison reform.

"Whatever you think I did, I think I've paid my debt to society and I think I can get a second chance to be a contributing citizen so that I can benefit the citizens of Massachusetts," DiMasi told reporters in November.

The former North End Democrat's attempt to resurrect his career in politics, however, was greeted with a closed door by Galvin, who in March 2019 rejected his application to register as a lobbyist.

DiMasi appealed the denial, but an administrative hearing officer from Galvin's office upheld the secretary's decision in December, prompting DiMasi to seek relief from the courts.

Gordon wrote in his ruling that the narrow construction of the law argued by DiMasi is "no more absurd" than the broad interpretation sought by Galvin.

The judge cited a Supreme Judicial Court precedent from a 1986 case involving the Boston Retirement Board in which the state's highest court recognized as significant the Legislature's failure to reference federal crimes in state statute as a trigger for legal consequences.

In fact, Gordon wrote that “one might fairly deride as absurd” the notion that a law intended to create guidelines for an automatic denial, which would remove discretion from the process, should be interpreted to also give the secretary the freedom to decide which federal and non-Massachusetts crimes were analogous to the ones enumerated in the statute.

The judge also suggested that based on DiMasi’s federal convictions he could have been prosecuted under state statutes by the attorney general, but wasn’t, and cast doubt on the prospects for Galvin’s “alternate theory” for denial should he pursue it.

Galvin’s office has suggested that DiMasi also could have been denied based on his failure to register as a lobbyist while also serving as speaker and advocating for the software firm, Cognos – the same action for which he was convicted of corruption.

Gordon was appointed to the Superior Court bench in 2013 by former Gov. Deval Patrick. Prior to that, he worked at the Boston law firm Ropes & Gray for more than two decades, with a focus on labor and employment law.

Deal reached on Massachusetts early, mail-in voting bill

Matt Murphy and Chris Van Buskirk
State House News Service

A deal has been reached between leaders in the House and Senate on early voting and vote-by-mail legislation that should pave the way for a major expansion of voting options

ahead of the 2020 election to encourage participation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rep. John Lawn, the lead House negotiator on the bill, told the News Service Monday morning that the conference committee had reached agreement, and planned to file its report by Monday afternoon. The Watertown Democrat said he anticipated a vote of the full House on the final bill Tuesday.

“Hopefully we’ll take this up tomorrow and then to the Senate and get it to the governor as soon as possible,” Lawn said.

The House and Senate versions of the bill instruct the secretary of state’s office to mail every voter an application to request a mail-in ballot for the primaries on Sept. 1 and the general election on Nov. 3. The goal, lawmakers have said, is to allow voters to avoid the polls, but still participate during the upcoming primaries and general election if they feel unsafe due to the ongoing pandemic.

The bill also for the first time in Massachusetts creates an early voting window before the statewide primary, and expands early voting before the general election. Voting in-person will remain an option.

The legislation went to conference committee June 18 after the two branches diverged on application mailing methods and limitations to when local clerks could change polling locations. The deal being finalized Monday would have registered voters receive two applications to request mail-in ballots: one will be mailed by July 15 for the primary election, and another in September for those who want to vote by mail in the general election.

The conference committee opted against a Senate plan to use the voter information guides that are sent every election by Secretary of State William Galvin to households around the state as a vehicle to deliver one of the applications.

“We’re trying to have it be as clear as possible so people aren’t calling clerks and getting confused,” Lawn said.

The six members of the committee also agreed to let local clerks change the location of a polling station up to 20 days before the election, which reflects what was in the Senate version of the bill. The idea is to give election officials some flexibility to respond if there were to be an outbreak of COVID-19 at a school or in another building that doubles as a polling location.

The final version of the bill was negotiated by Lawn and Reps. Michael Moran of Boston and Brad Hill of Ipswich for the House, and by Sen. Barry Finegold of Andover, Sen. Cynthia Creem of Newton, and Sen. Ryan Fattman of Sutton.

A joint statement from leaders in both branches was being prepared to announce the compromise.

After nearly two weeks of negotiating behind closed doors, the “jacket,” or cover sheet that must be signed by members of the conference committee before a report is filed with the clerk to signal agreement, was picked up Monday morning from the House clerk.

It’s unclear if all six, including the two Republicans, plan to sign off on the final compromise.

The House approved its own version of the bill on June 4 and the Senate followed suit on June 16 after dealing with a combined 68 amendments.

A new Suffolk University poll for WGBH News, the State House News Service, The Boston Globe and MassLive found that just 24.8 percent of voters expect to vote by mail this fall, while 61.4 percent said they would vote in person and almost 12 percent said they were undecided.

The poll taken June 18-21 also found that Democrats were far

more likely than Republicans to be interested in the vote-by-mail option. Thirty-two percent of Democrats said they would vote by mail, compared to just 6 percent of Republicans and 24 percent of unenrolled voters.

Massachusetts House approves Juneteenth as a state holiday

Chris Van Buskirk
State House News Service

Juneteenth is a step closer to becoming a state holiday in Massachusetts after the House on Wednesday agreed to mark June 19 as Juneteenth Independence Day.

The holiday took place last Friday and residents across the state took the streets in large numbers to peacefully celebrate the occasion against a backdrop of nationwide protests against police violence and systemic racism. State officials, including Gov. Charlie Baker, have filed police reform bills they hope to pass before the end of session on July 31.

Rep. Bud Williams of Springfield filed Juneteenth amendment and called its addition to a COVID-19 spending bill a “big step” during a speech during Wednesday’s House session.

“This a real important day,” he said. “We filed this in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter. In terms of making this state holiday, it will go a long way in bridging the racial gap between individuals.”

Juneteenth is a celebration of the day when enslaved African

Americans in Texas were told they were free, more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Several bills were filed in the House and Senate last week that would make it an official state holiday in Massachusetts.

The Senate still needs to act on the Juneteenth proposal and leaders in that branch have indicated support for making the day a state holiday.

Williams said the discussion around making Juneteenth a state holiday started two weeks ago during a weekend phone call with Rep. Mindy Domb (D-Amherst). Domb offered the idea and then Sens. Jo Comerford and Sonia Chang-Diaz and Reps. Maria Robinson and Chynah Tyler became involved in the effort, Williams said.

“Certainly, we’ve tried this many, many times. And this is part of Black history. And you can’t talk about the American history without talking about Black history,” he said. “And most individuals in the Commonwealth have no idea what Black history is.”

Tyler said she grew up attending an annual Juneteenth celebration in Boston’s Franklin Park in honor of the continued fight for freedom of African Americans.

“Today, we are making a tremendous pivot and truly delivering freedom to the African Americans with this amendment,” she said at Wednesday’s session. “Although this is the beginning of the road, I’m committed to helping us as a team deliver a more equitable Commonwealth for African Americans.”

House Speaker Robert DeLeo threw his support behind the amendment on Monday.

“#Juneteenth reminds us of the most painful parts of America’s history and shows us that while progress is possible, we have much more to do,” he said in a Tweet. “Proud to sign on to

Rep. Williams' Amendment #81 to make Juneteenth a state holiday."

Gov. Charlie Baker issued a Juneteenth proclamation Friday, and said he looks forward "to working with our legislative colleagues to recognize this important day more widely going forward."

Asked about the the holiday bills during a press conference last Friday, Baker said he "would look forward to working with the Legislature to come up with an approach to this that puts a much finer emphasis and a bigger point on Juneteenth."

Massachusetts death total from COVID-19 passes 8,000

Katie Lannan
State House News Service

The state's death toll from COVID-19 surpassed 8,000 on Friday, with the report of 50 new fatalities. Thirty-nine of those deaths were among patients with test-confirmed cases of COVID-19, while the other 11 were from probable cases, which the Department of Public Health defines as someone with a positive antibody test who either had COVID-like symptoms or experienced likely exposure to the respiratory disease.

Of the 8,013 people in Massachusetts whose deaths are attributed to COVID-19, the bulk – 4,996 people – were aged 80 and older. Sixty-three percent of the deaths, or 5,051, were reported in long-term care facilities.

The state's total caseload now stands at 108,070, including

103,071 test-confirmed cases and 4,999 probable cases indicated by antibody tests. Friday's report included 149 new confirmed cases, from 8,545 viral tests, and 84 new probable cases.

The seven-day weighted average of the positive molecular test has been below 2 percent since June 20, according to the Department of Public Health, but ticked up slightly on June 25, to 1.9 percent from 1.8 percent the previous two days. The number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 dropped by 31 in Friday's report, to 791, with 156 patients in intensive care units and 99 intubated. Two of the state's hospitals were using their surge capacity, down from four the previous day.

Northampton City Council vote results in police department cutting five police positions

After the Northampton City Council voted to cut their police budget by 10%, the Northampton police chief announced that the department is cutting five full-time police positions and eliminating the full-time School Resource Officer.

The following was posted yesterday by the Northampton police chief on their Facebook page:

“Good Afternoon Northampton,

Last week the City Council voted to cut the police budget by 10%. A significant portion of the cut (\$475,426) was directly from our personnel services (staffing) budget. As a result, we have cut five full-time sworn police positions from the

department.

Who was cut? We had one vacant position that will remain unfilled. We have an individual who is currently working for us and who was scheduled to attend the next academy. Two additional employees are currently in the police academy and are scheduled to graduate in a few weeks. Those three individuals were notified that they were being laid off as of June 30, 2020. An additional officer resigned yesterday, and the position will remain vacant.

As a result of these cuts, we have had to remove Officer Josh Wallace from his position as the full-time School Resource Officer. Josh will now be serving as part of the patrol unit. In these increasingly difficult times, we remain committed to best serving the complex public safety needs of our community.”- Chief Kasper