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*\*All quotes attributable to Defund WPD\**

### **Defund WPD Reaction to 8/11 Public Safety Subcommittee Meeting: WTF Was That?**

Anyone watching the Public Safety Subcommittee meeting tonight could be excused for wondering what the purpose of a democratic government is if elected officials ignore research, hours of public comment, hundreds of letters, emails and phone calls from constituents, and their own established rules of order.

First, the Worcester Police Department has suddenly reversed its position on body cameras. The body camera report released last month provided the public with an ambivalent take on the effectiveness of body cameras. Tonight, however, without presenting any additional data, research, or other information to explain why, WPD Chief Steven Sargent and his lieutenants praised the pilot program to subcommittee members.

Second, councilors abdicated their roles as good government watchdogs by asking the police softball questions that had no bearing on the body camera program. Councilor Donna Colorio used her time to clarify her “talking points” for later, most flagrantly asking WPD administration whether they were proud of their officers. Councilor Colorio’s inane questions did nothing but take up time and detracted from what should have been a debate on the cost-effectiveness of implementing a permanent body camera program.

Third, Chair Kate Toomey did not follow her own rules for the meeting. After announcing that no public comment would be allowed until another meeting on Monday, Councilor Toomey invited comments from multiple members of the police department, the president of the Worcester Police Officials Union, and City Councilors who are not members of the Public Safety Subcommittee. Using Robert’s Rules of Order to pick and choose favorable speakers signals to the Worcester community that those who are well-connected follow a different set of rules.

The proposed body camera program comes with a price tag of up to \$11 million in just its first four years. With a cost this steep -- and still no word of whether it would be funded from within the pre-existing WPD budget or by expanding the police budget -- Worcester residents should be concerned by how lightly councilors Toomey and Colorio seem to be taking their oversight roles.

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