



**City Commission Workshop**  
**MINUTES**

**August 6, 2023, 2:00 p.m.**  
**See Attached Notice**

Members Present: Mayor Ward, Commissioner Book, Commissioner Chestnut, Mayor Pro Tempore Duncan-Walker, Commissioner Eastman, Commissioner Saco, Commissioner Willits

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**A. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 2:12 pm.

**B. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**C. BUSINESS DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Introduction given by Tony Jones, Special Advisor for Community Relations.

Invocation given by Superintendent Kenyarda T. Feathers from Williams Temple Church of God in Christ Family Ministries.

Welcome and Reason for Convening given by District I Commissioner, Mayor Pro Tempore Duncan-Walker.

Opening Remarks and Recognition of Elected Officials given by District II Commissioner Ed Book.

Dinner and Panel Discussion: The Role of Community in Addressing Gun Violence.

Greg Bradley, Founder and President of Mirror Image Leadership Academy, moderates this panel discussion as experts from a variety of disciplines share effective methods for making the community part of the solution.

Panelists: 1) Lauryn Simmons, Junior Class Vice-President, Gainesville High School; 2) Zouzouko Doualehi, Compliance Manager, City of Gainesville Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; 3) Heather Jones, Chief Assistant State Attorney, Office of the State Attorney, Eight Judicial Circuit; 4) Alexandra

Martinez, Director of the Alachua County Crisis Center; and 5) Adrian Price, Social Acceptance Advocate.

1. Definition of gun violence - harm to self or others using a firearm, can include psychological impact to family, friends, and community.
2. What are the root causes of gun violence - those exposed to gun violence increase the likelihood of their also perpetrating gun violence.
3. Positives and shortcomings of youth programming - help provide positive male role models, but these programs need funding, all hands on deck approach because there is not one answer.
4. Why not teach Christian values in school?
5. What is the most pressing issue around suicidality and the use of firearms - A stigma still exists, our community does have resources like the Alachua County Crisis Center, but we must listen to one another and have empathy as we hear about someone's pain. Over half of suicides result from gun violence.
6. Reintegrated individuals exiting incarceration - There is still a social stigma, and licensing is restricted in most professions, (i.e. barbers, plumbers) to those without a criminal record.
7. How to teach youth communication to have better language to speak about gun violence - break it down more and be in a teenager/youth perspective, not just one solution, do not overcomplicate it.
8. What is the value of these discussions if the people in this room are not the ones perpetrating gun violence - give an open forum, and take information out into the community; each person has a circle of influence; we are here to figure out a way to bridge the gap between those who do and do not commit gun violence.
9. Address the connection between racism, marginalization, and poverty - absolutely connected, why addressing gun violence must be multifaceted, also contributes to the barriers to mental health and the stigma.
10. Will there be opportunities to address communication issues, role play, or practice and learn how to deliver the message that will be heard - parents are panicked, so talking at youth instead of with youth, slow down and listen; noted there is a community need for a workshop on this; Black on Black Taskforce have youth town halls to help facilitate the conversation.

Organizations Present: Alachua County Government; Alachua County School District; Alachua County Children's Trust; Alachua County Library District; Career Source of North Central Florida; Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County; Episcopal Children's Services; Florida Department of Probation and Parole Services; Grace to Overcome, Inc.; IGB Education Program; Moms Demand Action for Guns Sense in America; Mama's Club; Nathan Ross, Inc.; Peaceful Paths, Domestic Violence Agency; Santa Fe Achievement Program; SPARK 352; Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention; Manhood Foundation; Mirror Image Leadership Academy; Green Dot GNV; Visionaires Club; League of Women Voters; Meridian Behavior Healthcare Inc.; Horizon House; River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding; and more in the resource fair.

Recess 4:32 pm

Reconvene 6:22 pm

Yvette Carter, Director of Government Affairs and Community Relations, welcomed everyone to the youth town hall.

Marsha Kiner, Executive Director, Alachua County Children's Trust, introduced Commissioner Duncan-Walker.

Mayor Pro Tempore Duncan-Walker moderated a youth town hall panel.

Panelists, Academic Experts:

Dr. Derek Hicks, Associate Professor of Religion and Culture in the School of Divinity at Wake Forest University.

Dr. Micah Johnson, Assistant Professor of Sociology in the Department of Mental Health Law & Policy at the University of South Florida Youth Panelists.

Marland Perry, Jr., Youth Steering Committee Member, City of Gainesville One Nation One Project.

Youth Panelists from Manhood Foundation Youth Program.

Video clip of the song Who I Smoke shown. Discussion on the impacts of drill music on youth and strategies for counteracting the messaging in the music; how to reach youth who may be influenced by this music was also discussed.

**D. MEMBER COMMENT**

**E. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

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Kristen J. Bryant, Interim City Clerk