



**City Commission Workshop  
MINUTES**

**August 7, 2023, 9:00 a.m.  
See Attached Notice**

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

Members Absent: Commissioner Saco

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**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order at 9:13 am.

**B. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**C. BUSINESS DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Lonnie Scott, Sr. Chief of Police, welcomed everyone to day two of the prevent gun violence summit.

Invocation was given by Dr. Marie Herring, Dayspring Missionary Baptist Church.

Welcome and Reason for Convening by Mayor Ward.

Opening Remarks and Recognition of Elected Officials by City Commissioner Chestnut and County Commissioner Anna Prizzia.

Overview and Introduction to the Social Ecological Model - On July 20, 2023, the Gainesville City Commission declared gun violence a public health crisis. Gainesville Community Health Director Brandy Stone, MPH, CPH, and University of Florida Senior Lecturer Julia Varnes, PhD, give an overview of a public health approach to violence prevention as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Social-Ecological Model (SEM) will be described as a tool to develop actionable policies and practices.

Public Comment: Dr. Hicks, Bishop Stokes, Diyonne McGraw, Tina Certain.

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.

Sector Breakouts: A Public Health Perspective for Gun Violence Prevention This series of breakout sessions is divided by sector. Each group will brainstorm factors relative to the sphere of influence using the Social-Ecological Model. The discussions will include prevention strategies and protective factors such as safe homes, social support networks, convenient healthcare, and opportunities for engaging programs and activities.

- Public Health, Healthcare and Social Services
- Elected Officials / Local Government
- Public Safety / Judicial System Stakeholders
- Educators and School Administrators
- Business and Civic Community Members

Commissioner Chestnut - 1) afterschool programs into the public housing area, funding from GPD and landlords; CareerSource - Workforce Innovated Act, summer high & middle student jobs and beyond; 2) PSA on gun storage; student referrals working with them and their whole family; school district hired 23 social workers; frequent juvenile offenders; Duval Elementary - colocate services there for families; solve transportation; PSA in-service on how to ride the bus; 3) 64 neighborhood organizations and teach about Teen Court and other programs; city zoning limiting exposure to negative influences (i.e., dispensaries, liquor stores, multi-family housing).

Commissioner Willits - 1) open alcohol container, need more data to see the connection with intersecting gun violence; 2) protective factor - education, continued activation of youth; housing affordability, including insurance - not just the un-housed, but more the under-housed; advocate for gun sense laws with state legislatures.

Satori Days, County Community Support Services - 1) wrap-around services; community policing; positive exposure to students; parent engagement, financial literacy; reducing predatory loan programs; cross collaborations between city and county; 2) training for and by non-profit community partners.

Invocation was given by Pastor Gerard Duncan, Prayers by Faith Ministries.

Mayor Ward introduced the keynote speaker, Ariel Cathcart.

Lunch / Keynote Speaker: Ariel Cathcart, Everytown for Gun Safety.

Panel Review: Learning from Sectors. This is an opportunity to learn from the sectors. As moderator of this panel review, Mayor Harvey L. Ward Jr. will employ the following prompts to generate discussion based on the previous activity.

- How can your sector intervene with positive action items to work across each level of the social-ecological model to prevent gun violence?
- What can your sector do to increase protective factors and decrease risk factors for gun violence in our community?

Panel: Lonnie Scott, Sr., Gainesville Police Chief; Zeria Folston, Director of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Commissioner Cynthia Chestnut; Dr. Melvena Wilson, University of Florida Professor, Department of Health Education & Behavior; Pastor Karl Anderson, Upper Room Church of God in Christ.

Communication - between agencies and with the public, ensure people are aware of the issues with guns in the community, both within the city and surrounding areas. Coordinate communications between all law enforcement agencies throughout the community, as well as with the State Attorney and Public Defender offices.

Education - creating a new school within the district that addressed behavior and mental health and funding from all partners, incentivizing parents to be engaged, community events, and job fairs at the schools. Level of education directly related to perpetrators of gun violence.

Bishop Stokes Model - agency compliment the work with individuals to provide service to the whole family, community, and environment.

Current Resources - 1) TeensWork, which gave 220 students jobs, and there is a gap for older students; 2) BOLD Program by GPD, helps students with legal issues to get them back on track; and 3) Cease Fire program, wrap-around services for youth who are on probation and their families. Increase communications with these youth through social media and PSAs. Trade Schools opportunities to give skills to these youth.

Vocational/Technical School - Similar to Lively Technical College, BOLD program connects youth and others to these programs and gives them more than a job, rather a career. Duval Elementary - colocate services there for families.

Increase Protective Backers - education to parents that they know what is out there so they can protect their children, i.e. Drill Music. Resources are available both for the youth and parents/families, must get the word out. Utilize Gainesville's 64 community organizations to disseminate information.

Establish a Coordinated Community Response to gun violence, similar to the domestic violence response that brings all stakeholders to the table.

Normalize talking about gun violence and engage with youth on probation.

Celebrate our young people and all of their wins.

Commissioner Ed Book introduced the tabletop exercise.

Tabletop Exercise: All stakeholders have a role to play in preventing gun violence. This tabletop exercise encourages participants to share knowledge and perspectives as they work through a real-world, multi-phase gun violence scenario together. Using the Social-Ecological Model to address a series of increasingly complex health and social challenges, this activity focuses on interoperability between sectors. Led by Gainesville Community Health Director Brandy Stone, MPH, CPH.

Mayor Ward introduced the closing speaker Bishop Christopher Stokes and Jeffrey Weisberg.

Next Steps / Where do we go from here? Our final session is led by Bishop Christopher Stokes of the Willie Mae Stokes Community Center and Jeffrey Weisberg of the River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding. The discussion looks at the next steps in the development of enhanced communication, improved leveraging of resources, and centralized data collection to heighten future collaborative strategies. Participants also have an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned.

Closing Remarks - City Manager Cynthia Curry and Mayor Harvey L. Ward, Jr.

Commissioner Eastman joined the meeting at 11:15 am.

**D. MEMBER COMMENT**

**E. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 4:57 pm.

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Kristen J. Bryant, Interim City Clerk