



A Message From District 4 Police Commissioner Scotty Boman My First Eight Months Representing You

Neighbor:

This is my first general email to constituents since the voters of District 4 elected me to serve on the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners.

A great deal has happened during my first eight months in office. When I sought this position, I promised to focus on several priorities: reducing the backlog of citizen complaints, strengthening transparency and public accountability, securing independent legal counsel for the Board, and working to ensure that future labor agreements respect the powers granted to civilian oversight by the Detroit City Charter.

We have made meaningful progress on some of those commitments, and I want to share some of that progress with you.

But first, there is an important and time-sensitive matter that deserves your attention.

This Thursday: Virtual Public Comment May Be Banned

This Thursday may be the last opportunity for community members to make virtual public comments at Detroit Board of Police Commissioners meetings.

At our Thursday, September 3 meeting, commissioners are scheduled to vote on a motion that would ban virtual public comments.

Meeting information:

<https://detroitmi.gov/events/board-police-commissioners-meeting-september-3-2026>

Depending on the outcome of the vote, the virtual participation option described in the event announcement may no longer be available at future meetings. If you are unable to attend Board meetings in person, I encourage you to take advantage of the virtual option this week and make your voice heard.

I also know that some community members have told me they are reluctant to attend meetings in person because they are uncomfortable being asked to show identification. Michigan's Open Meetings Act addresses the right to attend a public meeting. MCL 15.263(4) states:

"A person must not be required as a condition of attendance at a meeting of a public body to register

or otherwise provide his or her name or other information or otherwise to fulfill a condition precedent to attendance."

Public oversight works best when the public can participate. Whatever your position on an issue before the Board, your ability to observe your government and speak to your elected representatives matters.

Protecting the Board's Charter-Mandated Authority

On June 4th, the Board approved the following resolution, which I wrote. Its purpose is to protect the authority Detroit voters placed in civilian police oversight through the City Charter:

RESOLUTION OF THE DETROIT BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS REGARDING THE PROTECTION OF CHARTER-MANDATED AUTHORITY IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS

WHEREAS, the members of the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC) have taken an oath to faithfully discharge the duties of their office as established by the Charter of the City of Detroit; and

WHEREAS, the Charter of the City of Detroit, as authorized by state law, is the foundational governing document that establishes the authority, responsibilities, and limits of all City offices, including the BOPC; and

WHEREAS, Section 6-408 of the Charter provides that the Labor Relations Division shall act for the City, under the direction of the Mayor, in the negotiation and administration of collective bargaining agreements, and that the Detroit City Council must ratify such agreements before they become effective; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of all City officials involved in the negotiation, approval, and ratification of collective bargaining agreements to ensure that such agreements do not conflict with, diminish, or nullify any provision of the Charter (not modified by state law); and

WHEREAS, prior collective bargaining agreements, including those with the Detroit Police Officers' Association (DPOA), the Detroit Police Lieutenants & Sergeants Association (DPLSA) and Command Officers Association (COA) have contained provisions that effectively limited or circumvented the Charter-mandated authority of the BOPC; and

WHEREAS, such provisions have, in practice (while legal under state law), impaired the ability of Commissioners to fulfill their duties as enumerated in Chapter 8 of the Charter, including but not limited to being the final authority in imposing or reviewing discipline as required under Chapter 8 Section 7-803, and the approval of promotions as required under Chapter 8 Section 7-814 of the Charter; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, the BOPC exercised its Charter authority by unanimously voting to reject the promotion of a Corporal to Sergeant following an incident involving misconduct against a hospital patient, yet an arbitrator, acting under the terms of a labor agreement, subsequently overrode that decision; and

WHEREAS, the use of contractual provisions or arbitration outcomes, while legal under state law, to override Charter-mandated authority undermines the intent of the Charter, erodes public trust, and raises serious concerns regarding the lawful exercise of governmental power; and

WHEREAS, the BOPC recognizes that upcoming negotiations with the DPOA, DPLSA and COA present an opportunity to ensure that future agreements fully respect and preserve the authority established by the Charter;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners formally urges the Mayor of the City of Detroit to direct the Labor Relations Division to ensure that no collective bargaining agreement is negotiated that conflicts with, limits, or nullifies any Charter-mandated authority of the BOPC or any other City official; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the BOPC strongly recommends the inclusion of clear contractual language in all future collective bargaining agreements stating that no provision of such agreements shall be interpreted or applied in a manner that supersedes or diminishes the Charter of the City of Detroit; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the BOPC calls upon the Detroit City Council to carefully review all proposed collective bargaining agreements and to refuse ratification of any agreement that is inconsistent with the Charter

or that undermines the authority granted therein; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that pursuant to state law the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners stands ready to work collaboratively with the Mayor, the Labor Relations Division, and the Detroit City Council to ensure that all agreements reflect both the letter and the spirit of the Charter, thereby preserving accountability, transparency, and public confidence in the governance of the Detroit Police Department.

Adopted by the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners on this __4th__ day of __June__, 2026.

The Board Briefly Approved Independent Legal Counsel

I have long advocated for the Board of Police Commissioners to have its own attorney.

I have expressed the opinion that an oversight body must be able to obtain legal advice that is focused on protecting its responsibilities, independence, and Charter-mandated authority. On June 18th, a motion to move us in that direction passed. Unfortunately, that action was rescinded on July 2nd.

I have not given up on this issue. Stay tuned for updates.

Progress on the Complaint Backlog

Finally, I want to end with some encouraging news.

When I took office, addressing the backlog of citizen complaints was one of my highest priorities. These complaints are not simply numbers on a spreadsheet. Each one represents a Detroit resident who took the time to bring a concern to the civilian oversight process and deserves a timely resolution.

As part of that process, my colleagues and I review complaint cases. When a case becomes more than a year old, disciplinary consequences are no longer available. That makes timely investigations especially important.

Today, the longstanding backlog is approaching its conclusion. The oldest cases are now only a couple of weeks beyond the one-year mark, and many complaints are being resolved within the required time-frame.

That does not mean our work is finished. Every complaint should be resolved in less than a year. But compared with where we started, this is real progress... and I intend to keep pushing until catching up is no longer the goal because staying caught up has become the standard.

Eight Months Down and More Work Ahead

Civilian oversight only works when it is genuinely independent, when the public has access to it, and when commissioners are willing to use the authority Detroiters gave them.

During my first eight months, I have tried to keep the promises I made to District 4: strengthen accountability, defend transparency, protect the Board's Charter authority, and help make the complaint process work for the people it was created to serve.

There is much more to do.

I welcome your comments, concerns, and ideas, and I encourage you to stay involved. Attend our meetings when you can. Speak during public comment. Follow the decisions being made in your name. And please continue holding me (and the entire Board) accountable.

This is your Board. Your voice belongs in the process.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Scott Boman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Scott Boman
District 4 Police Commissioner
Detroit Board of Police Commissioners