

Civilian Oversight Initiative Update

City Council
September 10, 2026

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History & Context

- Early 2000s: The Human Rights Commission called for a local civilian oversight body.
- 2020: Then-Mayor Curatone called for a Civilian Oversight body as part of the City's declaration of systemic racism as a public health emergency.
- 2020: A public survey finds 81 % of Somerville residents support civilian oversight.
- 2021: Community groups and the City Council provide recommendations on structure and mission.
- 2025: The Civilian Oversight Task Force completes two-year long process and releases recommendations on mission, role, composition, and implementation plan.

Current Considerations

- Key Primary resources:
 - 2025 Civilian Oversight Task Force Report
 - 2023 RSJ Community Workshops
 - 2021 City Council Resolution
 - 2021 City Council Analysis Report
 - 2021 Just Us Somerville Policy Demands
- Role of Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission
- Acknowledgment and realities of collective bargaining
- Policy development action steps
 - Review of primary resources
 - Research of comparable municipal ordinances and bylaws
 - Engagement and learning sessions (Council, advocates, subject matter experts)

Upcoming Timeline

September 10th

Civilian Oversight Overview
Update on collective bargaining process

September 24th

Update item from Administration policy development process

September 29th

Policy development discussion in Legislative Matters (tentative)

October

Public hearing regarding Civilian Oversight