

Approved Minutes of Board of Police Commissioners
Date of Meeting: Thursday, January 8, 2026 – 6:30 PM
Location: Gesu Catholic School – 17139 Oak Drive, Detroit, MI 48221

1. **Chair Dewaelsche** called the BOPC Board Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. A quorum was declared.

A. **Invocation.** Father Lorn Snow provided the invocation.

2. **Introduction of Police Commissioners.**

Detroit Board of Police Commissioners' Membership / Attendance		
	In Attendance	Not-In Attendance
Eva Garza Dewaelsche, Chair	Yes	
Darryl Woods, Vice Chair	Yes	
Henrietta Ivey	Yes	
Lavish T. Williams	Yes	
Darius Morris		Excused
Scott Boman	Yes	
Beverly J. Watts	Yes	
Lisa Carter	Yes	
Victoria Camille	Yes	
Robert Jones	Yes	
Quorum (Yes)	9	1

3. **Chair Dewaelsche** requested the approval of the Agenda for Thursday, January 8, 2026. The motion was accepted and adopted.

4. **Chair Dewaelsche** requested the approval of the Meeting Minutes for December 18, 2025. The minutes were adopted as presented.

5. **Chair Dewaelsche** requested the approval of the Closed Session Meeting Minutes for December 18, 2025 for Eric Hollis. The agenda item was postponed until January 15, 2026.

6. **Chair Dewaelsche** requested the approval of the Closed Session Meeting Minutes for December 18, 2025 for Coleton Allen. The agenda item was postponed until January 15, 2026.

7. **Introduction of Board administrative and investigative staff, the Chief of Police, Elected Officials or Representatives and Community Leaders.**

8. **BOPC Officers' Report – Chair Dewaelsche**

A. **Resolution Honoring Lieutenant Richard Baker (Posthumously)**

Resolution Honoring Lieutenant Richard Baker (Posthumously)

WHEREAS From an early age, Richard Baker made a personal commitment to serving the community. His dedication led him to join the Detroit Metropolitan Police Academy. Upon graduation, Police Officer Baker was appointed to the Detroit Police Department on August 19, 1968; and

WHEREAS Police Officer Baker excelled in his assignments and exhibited excellence in leadership. He earned promotion to the rank of Sergeant on April 5, 1976 and was assigned to the Narcotics Section until September 1, 1982. Sergeant Baker's assignments also included the Fourth Precinct and the Twelfth Precinct. On July 24, 1998, he earned promotion to the rank of Lieutenant and was assigned to the Eighth Precinct followed by Western Operations and the Eight Precinct again. On July 16, 2002, Lieutenant Baker was assigned to Eastern Operations, where he served until his retirement on July 10, 2004; and

WHEREAS During 34 years of service, he was the deserving recipient of numerous accolades from area residents, as well as praise from peers and superiors who considered him a consummate law enforcement professional; and

WHEREAS Retired Lieutenant Baker never stopped working with the community, always showing the same engaging manner that had helped the Police Department build trust and improve police-community relations. He remained devoted to mentoring young officers, school students, and other youth, including participants in the Police Explorers program. He continued working with community groups and civic organizations, and he positively touched and influenced thousands. Many knew him by his nickname, Cookie, and as a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. He had a tremendous impact on Detroit because of the many strong connections and contributions that he made as a community leader, as well as a law enforcement professional. Sadly, he passed away December 25, 2025. The Board of Police Commissioners extends sincere condolences to his family and friends, who will celebrate his life on January 10, 2026 at 11 a.m. at Greater New Mt Moriah Baptist Church.

Therefore, be it

RESOLVED, The Board of Police Commissioners awards this resolution posthumously in honor of retired Lieutenant Richard Baker for his lasting impact on Detroit and residents during 34 years with the Detroit Police Department and as a lifelong community leader. His many contributions to public safety and the progress of Detroit residents merit our highest regards.

Commissioner Boman motioned “to approve the resolution honoring Lieutenant Richard Baker (Posthumously).” The motion was adopted.

B. Resolution Honoring Sergeant Nathaniel Rucker (Posthumously)

Resolution Honoring Sergeant Nathaniel Rucker (Posthumously)

WHEREAS Nathaniel Rucker pursued his interest in serving the community and in criminal justice by applying to the Detroit Metropolitan Police Academy at a pivotal time in the city’s history. Upon graduation, he was appointed to the Detroit Police Department on July 14, 1969, and

WHEREAS Police Officer Rucker excelled in his assignments and duties as he served the residents and communities with fairness and integrity. As Detroit still sought reforms to address the racism and police brutality at the root of the 1967 Rebellion, Police Officer Rucker made a priority of providing public safety while building trust and credibility with residents. He exhibited excellence in leadership and earned promotion to the rank of Sergeant on January 14, 1976. Sergeant Rucker’s assignments included the Third Precinct from August 15, 1980 to October 22, 1984; and

WHEREAS His next assignment was to the Office of the Chief Investigator, where Sergeant Rucker worked closely with the Board of Police Commissioners for 15 years. The 1974 City Charter had established the Board to provide revolutionary, community-led oversight of the Police Department and gave the new Board robust powers over complaints about police officers. With his dedication to having a Police Department that made all residents proud, Sergeant Rucker diligently worked to achieve the most effective process for taking, investigating, and reporting on complaints about police abuse and policy violations, which helped the Board and Department address problems and make important changes; and

WHEREAS During his 30-year career, Sergeant Rucker was the deserving recipient of numerous accolades from area residents, as well as praise from his peers and superiors who considered him a consummate law enforcement professional. After retiring in 1999, he continued to work with residents and community groups for neighborhood safety and Detroit’s progress. Sadly, retired Sergeant Nathaniel Rucker recently passed away. The Board of Police Commissioners extends sincere condolences to his family and friends, who will celebrate his remarkable life on January 12, 2026.

Therefore, be it

RESOLVED The Board of Police Commissioners awards this resolution posthumously in honor of retired Sergeant Nathaniel Rucker for his contributions in advancing civilian oversight and his lasting impact on Detroit and residents during 30 years with the Detroit Police Department. His many contributions to public safety and community oversight of law enforcement merit our highest regards.

Commissioner Jones motioned “to adopt the resolution honoring Sergeant Nathaniel Rucker (Posthumously).” The motion was adopted.

C. Resolution Honoring Police Officer Steven Schmekel (Posthumously)

Resolution Honoring Police Officer Steven Schmekel (Posthumously)

WHEREAS A native Detroit, Steven Floyd Schmekel found his calling in law enforcement and joined the Detroit Metropolitan Police Academy on April 21, 1986. Upon his graduation, Police Officer Schmekel was assigned to the Seventh Precinct and began his law enforcement career on August 25, 1986; and

WHEREAS Police Officer Schmekel dutifully served the Seventh Precinct for 14 years and became well-known to the residents and stakeholders as he patrolled eastside neighborhoods and strengthened police-community relations throughout the area. On April 26, 2000, he was assigned to the Harbormaster Unit; and

WHEREAS Police Officer Schmekel found the Harbormaster Unit a perfect assignment for his dedication to law enforcement and his deep appreciation for nature. As someone who enjoyed fishing and other outdoor activities, he thrived for 25 years with the Harbormaster. Sadly, Officer Schmekel passed away on duty on December 19, 2025; and

WHEREAS Throughout his 40-year career, Officer Schmekel was the deserving recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the 2005 Major League Baseball All Star Game Award, the Rosa Parks Funeral Award, the NFL Super Bowl XL Award, both Consent Judgement Awards, and the 2014 Ford Fireworks Award. He also received many accolades from metro area residents, as well as praise from his peers and superiors who considered him a consummate law enforcement professional. A memorial service on December 27, 2025 celebrated the life and career of Police Officer Schmekel, and the Board continues to extend sincere condolences to his beloved family, friends, and fellow officers.

Therefore, be it

RESOLVED

The Board of Police Commissioners awards this resolution posthumously in honor of Police Officer Steven Floyd Schmekel and his 40 years of service with the Detroit Police Department. His remarkable and devoted public service for four decades merits our highest regards.

Commissioner Carter motioned “to adopt the resolution honoring Police Officer Steven Schmekel (Posthumously).” The motion was adopted.

9. Chief of Police and 12th Precinct Report.

Chief Todd A. Bettison reported on current CompStat Crime/Statistical Data for Violent Crime and Property and recent critical incidents impacting the community. On January 4, 2026 at a Detroit lounge/bar, officers were on the scene for a stabbing incident. During that time, a shooting incident occurred between two individuals, with the suspect striking the victim in the left shoulder. The suspect that committed the shooting is in custody and the Wayne County Prosecutors Office has charged him with first degree felony murder and resisting and obstructing a police officer. The Department is still actively looking for the suspect involved in the stabbing. Over the past week the Department’s Narcotics Unit has executed several search warrants that has led to three felony arrests, seven misdemeanor arrests, recovered cocaine, fentanyl, pills, and a firearm. As it pertains to traffic enforcement, the Department’s Traffic Enforcement Unit was active across the city in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh precincts, focusing on traffic intersections and areas with high numbers of deadly crashes. Officers issues 127 speeding tickets. On January 9, 2026, there will be a graduation ceremony for 26 student policy officers. That will be taking place at Second Ebenezer Church at 2:00 p.m.

Commissioner Carter stated that there were other DPD members present that were not introduced by the Chief of Police. **Chief Bettison** introduced Commander Donna McCord and Captain Timothy Jones. Chief Bettison instructed Commander McCord to introduce the twelfth precincts chaplains and neighborhood police officers. **Commissioner Carter** inquired if Chief Bettison introduced his Chief of Staff. **Chief Bettison** introduced his Chief of Staff Commander Shonda T. Starks. Chief Bettison also introduced Deputy Chief Jacqueline Pritchett.

Commissioner Watts inquired if the downward trend in the crime numbers can be attributed to community engagement. **Chief Bettison** stated absolutely. Various organizations in the City of Detroit have contributed to the downward trend in crime in the city.

Vice Chair Woods inquired if officers are administering Narcan when responding to calls pertaining to an overdose. **Chief Bettison** stated absolutely. Officers are carrying and administering Narcan. **Vice Chair Woods** requested that a report be provided to the Board that shows how many lives have been saved by administering Narcan and how many times it has been administered. **Chief Bettison** stated yes.

Commander Donna McCord reported on current CompStat Crime/Statistical Data for Violent Crime and Property and recent critical incidents impacting the 12th Precinct.

Vice Chair Woods recognized the neighborhood police officers of the twelfth precinct.

Chair Dewaelsche introduced Commissioner Lavish T. Williams as the newly appointed commissioner for District 2. **Commissioner Williams** provided remarks.

10. **Oral Communication / Public Comments:** Mr. Don Johnson, Ms. Sharon Kelso, Minister Eric Blount, Ms. Rella Landfair, Ms. Bernice Smith, Ms. Debra McCray, Mr. Rhuben Crowley, Former Commissioner William Davis, Mr. Marcel Vlacica, Ms. Victoria Kouari, Mr. Dior Wilson, Ms. Chemika Brown, Ms. Taura Brown and Mr. Jahdante Smith provided public comments.

Commissioner Camille motioned “that as a Board, we collectively draft and issue a public statement denouncing the use of any law enforcement agency to quash dissent and repress anyone from exercising their first amendment rights and further that this body is committed to explore and use our power that we may have to prevent such activity in Detroit.” The motion passed.

11. **Report from Board Secretary Lydia Gamier**

- A. 251222 BOPC Facial Recognition Report
- B. 251222 BOPC Shot Spotter Weekly Report
- C. 251229 BOPC Facial Recognition Report
- D. 251229 BOPC Shot Spotter Weekly Report
- E. 260105 BOPC Facial Recognition Report
- F. 260105 BOPC Shot Spotter Weekly Report
- G. Applicant Appeal Noel Morales
- H. Administrative Leave Without Pay but with Medical Benefits for Police Officer Corey Davis
- I. Administrative Leave Without Pay but with Medical Benefits for Police Officer Yahaira Gomez
- J. Administrative Leave Without Pay but with Medical Benefits for Police Officer Donald Boone
- K. Office of the Chief Investigator
 - (a) Preliminary 2025 End of Year Numbers (b) 2026 Budget Memorandum (c) 2025 Strategic Plan
 - (d) 2026 Strategic Plan Capacity (e) 2026 Six Month Action Plan
- L. Police Commissioner Camille Memorandum: DPD Lawsuit Reporting
- M. Announcements

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, January 15, 2026 @ 3:00 p.m. at Detroit Public Safety Headquarters, 1301 Third Street, Detroit, MI 48226

February Community Meeting: Thursday, February 12, 2026 @ 6:30 p.m. at 11th Precinct @ TBD

12. **Unfinished Business**

A. Motion to correct the motion (12-18-2025) approving the BOPC Budget FY26-27

Chair Dewaelsche motioned “to amend the motion adopting the budget by striking out \$5,018 - \$259,000 and inserting \$5,018,259.” The motion passed.

13. **New Business**

A. Discussion – Reporting of Lawsuits Filed Against DPD

Commissioner Carter motioned “to postpone this matter until January 15, 2026.” The motion passed.

14. **Adjournment.**

Chair Dewaelsche adjourned the meeting at 8:46 p.m.