

City of Detroit Board of Police Commissioners



A History of
Reform, Civil Rights,
Community Partnership,
and Public Safety



Board of Police Commissioners

The Detroit Board of Police Commissioners: A History of Reform, Civil Rights, Community Partnership,

The City of Detroit has helped pioneer civilian oversight of law enforcement since the 1970s.

In the aftermath of the 1967 uprising, Detroit residents continued to work for lasting reforms to a police department that the community knew as abusive and biased. In 1973, voters approved a new charter with numerous changes to city government, including the creation of a civilian oversight board for the Detroit Police Department. The Charter took effect in 1974 and - with the mandate that "the police department is headed by a 5-member board of police commissioners" - vested the new body with significant powers to make the department more responsive to the community, including the Board's authority to hire the police personnel director.

The 1974 City Charter took effect under a new mayor who also saw police reform as a priority. Mayor Coleman A. Young convened the first meeting of the civilian board on Monday, July 22, 1974. The first Commissioners appointed by the mayor and confirmed by City Council were Charles Butler, Douglas Fraser, Edward Littlejohn, Susan Mills-Peek, and Alexander Ritchie. The Board fulfilled the people's vision of broad, community-driven oversight with the clergy, labor, civil rights, public interest, education, and other sectors represented.

The first Board also was diverse in race and gender, a reflection of the mayor's commitment to equality. In the spirit of community participation, Board members served as volunteers without pay.

With a clear mandate from the people of Detroit, the Mayor, and the City Charter, the Board of Police Commissioners began to reshape the department to better represent and serve all residents. The Board stood at the forefront of change - and withstood the controversy that change can bring. One of Mayor Young's first acts was to disband STRESS - Stop the Robberies, Enjoy Safe Streets - an undercover unit that killed 20 people, mostly blacks, in only 30 months. Young also implemented a 50-50 affirmative action plan to address longstanding bias in promoting black officers and female officers. With its weekly meeting and decision-making powers, the Board and its first five members led the City into a new era of accountability, transparency, and community-focused policing.

Detroit's pioneering vision for civilian oversight of the police made the City a national model. The 1974 model endured for almost four decades before residents again voted for changes.

Amid 21st Century challenges, residents created a new process to elect city officials and amended the Charter to establish seven electoral districts for City Council members - and for the Board of Police Commissioners. Today, under the 2012 Charter, the Board has 11 members, with seven elected by district and four appointed by the Mayor and subject to City Council approval.

Detroit Mayors & Police Chiefs Since 1974

Listed by Term



**Mayor Coleman
A. Young**
1974-1993

**Chief Philip
Tannian**
1974-1975

**Chief Ella Bully
Cummings**
2003-2008



**Mayor Dennis
Archer**
1994-2001

**Chief William
Hart**
1976-1991

**Chief James
Barren**
2008-2009



**Mayor Kwame
Kilpatrick**
2002-2008

**Chief Stanley
Knox**
1991-1994

**Chief Warren
Evans**
2009-2010



**Mayor Ken
Cockrel Jr.**
2008-2009

**Chief Ike
McKinnon**
1994-1998

**Chief Ralph
Godbee**
2010-2012



**Mayor Dave
Bing**
2009-2013

**Chief Benny
Napoleon**
1998-2001

**Chief Chester
Logan**
2012-2013



**Mayor Mike
Duggan**
2013-present †

**Chief Charles
Wilson**
2001-2002

**Chief James
Craig**
2013-present

**Chief Jerry
Oliver**
2002-2003

† First Mayor Since The Election of Police Commissioners Under The 2012 Charter

Detroit Board of Police Commissioners Since 1974

Alphabetical Listing | Terms Appointed or Elected [🗳️]



N. Charles Anderson
1993-1994



Shirley A. Burch
2018-2021 🗳️



Sanford N. Cohen
1995-1999



Cleveland L. Anderson
1989-1994



Willie E. Burton
2014-2017 🗳️
2018-2021



Avern Cohn
1975-1979



Margaret E. Baylor
1991-1994



Charles Butler
1974-1976



Nathan Conyers
1987-1989



Willie E. Bell
2014-2017
2018-2021 🗳️



Wendell C. Byrd
2014-2015 🗳️



Reginald Crawford
2014-2017 🗳️



Arthur Blackwell II
2002-2007



Malcolm Carron
1977-1982



William M. Davis
2018-2021 🗳️



Elizabeth Brooks
2015-2020



Lisa Carter
2014-2017
2018-2021 🗳️



Inez DeJesus
1994-1998



Darryl D. Brown
2018-2021 🗳️



Mariam Clark
1994-1997



Eva Garza Dewaelsche
1998-2002
2015-2019



Walter Douglas
1976-1981



Willie E. Hampton
2002-2007



Richard P. Kughn
1982-1987



Eugene Driker
1979-1983



Nathan Head
1998-2003



Edward Littlejohn
1974-1978



David Ellis
1984-1989



Jim Holley
2004-2009
2018-2023



Conrad L. Mallett Jr.
2014-2017
2018



Douglas Fraser
1974-1975



Kenneth L. Hollowell
1994-1998



Stanley Marx
2000-2001



Evette Griffie
2018-2021



Annie M. Holt
2019-2023



Sharon McPhail
1985-1990



Ronald L. Griffin
2008-2010



W. Anthony Jenkins
2001-2002



Sharon Bernard Miller
1979-1981



Harold Gurewitz
1989-1993



Arthur L. Johnson
1987-1992



Ricardo R. Moore
2014-2017

Detroit Board of Police Commissioners Since 1974

Alphabetical Listing Cont. | Terms Appointed or Elected [🔄]



Megan Norris
2004-2006



Adela M. Rivera
2009-2011



S. Martin Taylor
1979-1983



Mohamed Okdie
2005-2010



Derrick Sanders
2015-2018



Edgar Vann II
1998-2003
2014-2017



Susan Mills Peek
1974-1979



Harold Shapiro
1983-1988
1993-1995



Rev. Jerome L. Warfield
2009-2014



Erminia Ramirez
2003-2008



John H. Sheard
1994-1998



Donnell R. White
2010-2015



Michael E. Reeves
2010-2012



Richard Shelby
2014-2017 🔄



Roy Levy Williams
1981-1986
1989-1994



Zeline Richard
1998-2001



Toney Stewart
2009-2013



Alexander Ritchie
1974-1977



Jessica Taylor
2011-2015

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Detroit Board of Police Commissioners: Districts & Precincts



Meeting Schedule

The Detroit Board of Police Commissioners meets every week on Thursday at 3 p.m. at Detroit Public Safety Headquarters (1301 Third Street) except for the second Thursday of the month when the BOPC holds community meetings at 6:30 p.m. at various locations.



Board of Police Commissioners

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BOPC ADMINISTRATION

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