

→ How do I testify via email?

Send your comments to the City Clerk at cityclerk@cityofomaha.org

You must provide your name and address to show that you are a citizen of Omaha.

Example email message:

"My name is <your name> and I would like to submit testimony for the next city council meeting about <topic>. My address is <your address>. Please forward this to the council members and include my testimony in the meeting record."

Know Your District Representative

Visit:

<https://citycouncil.cityofomaha.org/council-members> to locate your district by your address.

District 1: Pete Festersen

Pete.Festersen@cityofomaha.org

402-444-5527

District 2: Ben Gray

Ben.Gray@cityofomaha.org

402-444-5524

District 3: Chris Jerram

Chris.Jerram@cityofomaha.org

402-444-5525

District 4: Vinny Palermo

Vinny.Palermo@cityofomaha.org

402-444-5522

District 5: Rich Pahls

Rich.Pahls@cityofomaha.org

402-444-5528

District 6: Brinker Harding

Brinker.Harding@cityofomaha.org

402-444-5523

District 7: Aimee Melton

Aimee.Melton@cityofomaha.org

402-444-5526

Key Dates for the Police Contract

→ Tuesday, November 10th @ 2pm

Location: City Hall LC

•Public Hearing on Police Union Contract

The public's opportunity to be heard.

→ Tuesday, November 24th @ 2pm

Location: City Hall LC

City Council votes to approve or reject the Police Union Contract. Public comment is not accepted for this item in this meeting.

→ Sunday, December 27th

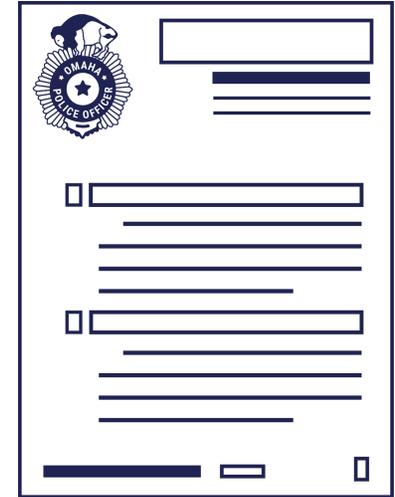
The new contract goes into effect, if approved.

Have some fun with our abolition word search!

C C P J N F J P D H X K B T D J Q K D S
 K D T W M O R R W G E K F U X U G V A M
 D M Z Y X T Q I T K X V S C A C K O C P
 C U J Y X P S S E U N O U L N T W D O Z
 F C W W K B L O T H H O I F M D D L P S
 Q D M R G E Y N N S C F Y N S F I J D R
 E A U I T D U O N S I Q K O S C Q Y S M
 H V D Q J B I X P E A S G I E V V Y U S
 U R I H J T K Y D E R A C T G S I V V H
 Q V G T I A V I H Z P W F A S M K E B Z
 Q T X L A R M T Y Y O V E R S I G H T C
 I Y O J C M Y T I L I B A T N U O C C A
 O B M C U S R H O J U X V I P D X S L L
 A T Z N H S A O W L R Z C B R O V H E H
 C E I Q P G T R F P U Z B R D G N T D I
 P T E K E B U I M S F K S A G M Y D E O
 Y S I M J I S X C P N F I K H B L F I M
 M I U C A W X O I E D A V C A L F H T Q
 J U R R I X M H S P H E R B P M K E A U
 U I W S Y P H D D W F H U T R Q V A O L

ABOLITION	OVERSIGHT
ACCOUNTABILITY	POLICE
ARBITRATION	PRISON
CARE	QUALIFIED IMMUNITY
JUSTICE	TRANSFORMATIVE

Testifying about Police Contracts



See sources on our Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook social media pages @omahaabolition or

www.omahaabolitionresearch.org

1. The contract with the Omaha Police Union enables the “bad apples,” and keeps them on the force and in the streets.

Across the country, police union contracts bind the hands of local government and police leadership when it comes to discipline for cops who engage in violence and misconduct on and off the job. The Omaha police contract is no different. The best example of this is the case of Zachary Bear Heels, who was killed by two OPD officers while another two officers watched. The officers tased Zachary 12 times and punched him in the head 13 times while he was seated and handcuffed. All four were fired by Chief Schmaderer, but three out of four bargained to get their jobs back through a process called “arbitration.” Arbitration, as outlined in the police contract, is a provision that allows police officers to appeal disciplinary proceedings and even termination. A third party arbitrator hears the appeal behind closed doors and frequently makes a decision to reverse disciplinary decisions made by the department. Arbitration in the context of collective bargaining is meant to protect workers who are “just doing their jobs,” so arbitration in the context of the Zachary Bear Heels incident presumes that killing people is just a hazard of the job.

Arbitration provisions help shield officers from disciplinary actions in cases where they abuse their power, which enables officers to act with recklessness and a sense of impunity rather than caution when interacting with the public.

2. The community the Omaha Police Department serves was not involved in the contract at all.

Collective bargaining to create a police contract happens primarily behind closed doors with input from only the police union and key city officials. Communities impacted by police misconduct have no say in the details of the contract, which is primarily designed to protect police officers. A public hearing offered after negotiations is the only opportunity for the public to weigh in, and we need more public input than a public hearing scheduled in the middle of a work day to create a contract that balances police demands with public safety concerns.

3. The contract does not support police accountability.

This police union contract includes a provision for a three-member reprimand review board that Mayor Stothert and Union President Tony Conner say improves accountability for police. This board is made up of one police union rep, one person selected by the mayor, and a city official. **The contract gives the police union the power to hand pick the people who are supposed to be holding them accountable**, which undermines not only the sentiment behind such a board but also damages the public trust.

OPD needs a completely independent oversight committee made up of elected civilians that is not tied to the contract negotiation process, not some charade created by the Mayor and OPOA president. Police oversight, like police discipline, should never be a bargaining chip between the city and the union if public safety is the priority.

4. The contract gives police perks in the midst of public backlash & an ACLU lawsuit.

Communities throughout Omaha have been more critical of police than ever before in 2020. Meanwhile, OPD officers got paid millions of tax dollars in overtime to suppress First Amendment-protected criticism of police with tear gas, flashbangs, pepper balls, and rubber bullets. These events drove home the point that protestors were making--something is terribly rotten within the institution of policing. Mayor Stothert publicly endorsed this public suppression of dissent, and has now approved a police union contract that includes regular raises for police, plus perks. This includes a new paid holiday for Juneteenth (\$400,000 in taxpayer money) and extra time off for police who pass a physical fitness assessment (with assessments conducted on the clock).

OPD officers don't deserve raises or perks after last summer's events, and communities impacted by police deserve a chance to weigh in on how their money is being spent.

Demand that Omaha City Council vote down the proposed police contract.

→ Why? Because...

- Community members have no part in the contract negotiation process, yet are impacted by it every day.
- It includes arbitration that enables officers to act with impunity and keeps bad cops on the force.
- It does nothing to reinforce police accountability and only works to protect cops.
- It gives even more perks and money to individual officers and the department overall during a time of unprecedented police backlash.

How to Testify before the City Council

→ When they will discuss or vote on my issue?

The agenda is usually finalized on the Thursday before the next Tuesday 2pm Council Meeting and emailed to interested citizens. Topics are generally discussed in agenda order, but they may bump a topic forward if a crowd has come for it. You can be added to the agenda email list. Email the City Clerk at: cityclerk@cityofomaha.org and ask, “Please add me to the email list for City Council meeting agendas.”

→ How do I testify in person?

At the Public Hearing there may be a sign-in table where you will register if you would like to speak. You will be asked for your first and last name, and your address. Sometimes they don't require a sign in, so listen for the agenda item you want to speak on; know if you're a proponent or opponent as they'll separate testimony accordingly. You will only be allowed to speak on topics directly related to the hearing and will be given **three minutes time** for your remarks. You will be notified when you have 1 minute remaining via a yellow light; when the light turns red your three minutes are over.

If you have written out your statement, you may submit it, with your name and address, to the council so they have it for review. It will become part of the official record, so consider bringing copies.