



Written by [James Murphy](#) on September 17, 2020

After Voting to Eliminate Police, Minneapolis City Council Now Complains About Crime Increase

Minneapolis City Council members — who all voted to [disband](#) the current police department in the city in June — grilled police chief Medaria Arradondo (shown) about an increase in crime in city on Tuesday.



Minneapolis has seen a substantial uptick in crimes such as street racing, robbery, carjackings, assaults, and shootings, an uptick that many believe is in part due to the civil unrest in the city after the death of criminal George Floyd in police custody in May. In no uncertain terms, the council was asking Arradondo what he intends to do about the crime increase.

The council meeting can be seen [here](#).

Council President Lisa Bender — who in June made headlines by claiming that any fear of disbanding the department came from a [“place of privilege”](#) — accused front-line officers of playing politics with their jobs by choosing not to enforce certain crimes.

“I also hear from constituents that rank and file officers on the street are telling them that they are not enforcing crime,” Bender complained. This is not new, but it is very concerning in the current context. I think there are a number of possible explanations for this. I think it’s possible they are, essentially campaigning, either politically because they don’t support the council member or in some cases the mayor, or perhaps they think that they are making the case for more resources for the department. I can tell you, in my ward, it is having the opposite effect. It is making people even more frustrated with the department.

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Arradondo called Bender’s allegations “troubling to hear,” and confirmed that the department was indeed enforcing crimes. “We need to make sure our communities know that we are going to be there,” the chief said. “That we’re going to be responsive. We’ve taken an oath to do that.”

Councilman Steve Fletcher also complained that his constituents were telling him that police were “not doing anything to prevent robberies,” specifically in the Marcy Holmes neighborhood of the city. Fletcher also complained about “a significant increase in extremely dangerous and reckless driving.”

“I’d love to know a little more about what the robbery suppression work is and what we are doing, what’s been sort of a pattern in Marcy over the past six weeks. Fletcher said to the chief.

In June, Fletcher wrote an [opinion piece](#) for *Time* entitled “I’m a Minneapolis City Council Member. We Must Disband the Police — Here’s What Could Come Next.” In the piece, Fletcher advocated for mental health professionals to answer certain calls without police back-up. He suggested similarly that the fire



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department and EMTs could handle drug overdose calls without police assistance. He also recommended unarmed “community-oriented street teams” to walk the streets focusing on “deescalation” of street crime and potential violence.

Councilman Andrew Johnson’s particular concern was the increase in carjackings in his ward. “I would appreciate some more information on how the carjackings. There have been a number of them in the community, and they’ve really terrorized residents,” Johnson said. “How do we stop it? Because it seems like a huge problem, and it’s something we absolutely want to stop and it also seems very difficult to stop.”

Johnson wondered why, in this new era of safety before justice, that the police department has a “no chase” policy, and he queried, “How do we actually hold these individuals accountable, get them off the streets so they aren’t terrorizing the community?”

All three of the council members who chastised the police chief were present at a June 7 Black Lives Matter demonstration in the city, where they took a pledge to disband the police department.

Only one councilman had the temerity to call out the hypocrisy. Phillippe Cunningham, the councilman for the the city’s 4th ward and also supports replacing the police with a re-imagined community safety force, said he was “flabbergasted” by his colleagues “who a very short time ago were calling for abolition [of the police department], are now suggesting we should be putting more resources and funding into MPD.”

For now, abolishing the Minneapolis Police Department is off the table. Since disbanding the department would mean a change to the city’s charter, the question requires public consent, therefore a vote. In early August, the question was dropped from the November ballot with the city’s charter commission saying that more time was needed to study the issue.

Image: [Screenshot of Minneapolis City Council meeting on YouTube](#)

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