

# Ward 3 meeting

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Agency: Akron City Council

Date: June 20, 2024

[See more about this meeting at Documenters.org](#)

## Summary

- The police are seeking information about several shooting incidents and/or deaths that have occurred in Akron, at least one of which happened in Ward 3. Anonymous tips can be given through the Akron Police Department's website.
- Akron's Independent Police Auditor Anthony Finnell was the guest speaker for the night. He introduced himself and discussed his position. Those in attendance were able to ask questions to better understand both his role and its limitations.
- Edna Borders spoke about home repair programs that are being offered by or in conjunction with Summit County. (See flyers at the end of this document.)

## Follow-Up Questions

- What does the Akron police training actually look like? How many hours of training do officers get? What kind of classes?
- What other systemic issues has Finnell identified within the police department?
- Has the city identified any factors for the seeming rise in crime, particularly gun violence? Does the city have a plan to address the underlying factors? Or at least to target the use of firearms?

## Notes

Here is an [audio recording](#) of the meeting.

Before the meeting began, officials distributed Ring cameras to the community members who had been approved for the [2024 Ring Doorbell Camera Program](#).

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

Including officials, there were about 30 to 35 people at the meeting.

Ward 3 Representative and Council President Margo Sommerville opened the meeting by introducing Officer Brown who is, according to Sommerville, “our neighborhood officer who joins us at our meeting every month just to provide information and share with us what’s happening in and around the neighborhood.”

- Brown introduced his partner, Officer Calvin Barker, and mentioned that citizens can sign up to [register their Ring cameras](#) in a database so that the Akron Police Department knows where cameras are if there’s an incident. He said that this doesn’t give APD access to cameras, it just gives them a place to start their investigations.
- Brown segued into talking about a [mass shooting](#) that occurred at the intersections of Kelly and 8th avenues June 2.
  - Brown said that the mayor’s office released photos of a [white SUV “they believe was involved.”](#) He encouraged people to check out the photos on social media or in the news.
- Brown continued to discuss other crimes that have happened.
  - Brown: “As far as things going on in the area: last night, there was a body that was found in Summit Lake.” At the time of the meeting, Brown said they didn’t have any information about who the person was or the cause of death. ([Here’s a link](#) to the most up-to-date information from the Beacon Journal.)
  - Brown: “June 13, over in the [600 block of West Thornton](#), there was a crash and a homicide. A young man was driving, was shot, wrecked his car, and ultimately succumbed to his injuries. That’s currently under investigation.”
  - Brown: “And then we have the shooting right over here, which was a day after the mass shooting. A young man was killed in a lot at [Bartges and Raymond](#). Detectives do have some leads on that that they’re following up on.”
- Brown said that if anybody has information on any of those incidents, they can call the detective bureau or submit an anonymous tip on the [APD website](#).
- He also said that [APD is hiring](#), and he brought information with some [frequently asked questions](#) for anyone interested.
- Brown opened the floor for questions or comments.
  - A community member brought up speeders at the intersection of [East Avenue and Diagonal Road](#), by the pool. She said, “Somebody’s going to get hit one of these days.” Brown said that the No. 1 complaint “we have city-wide is speeders. Any ward you go to in the city.” But he is hopeful that they can get speed tables. He said they can call 311 to ask about speed tables and he will send an email to the APD traffic unit for when

they go out and do speed enforcement because “they do it complaint-based.”

- Another community member mentioned that all the streetlights on East Avenue are out. She has called three different times over the last six weeks. Brown suggested that “the squeaky wheel gets the grease.”
- A third community member said that a semi has been parked on her street. Brown said he would go after the meeting to post a notice on the truck. If anyone else has this happen, they should call the non-emergency line, and the police will dispatch a cruiser.



Mayor  
Shammas Malik

Akron Police Department  
May 2024



Chief  
Brian J. Harding

Murders						Overdose Deaths						Reported Crimes					
Year	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change	Year	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change	Year	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change
Month						Month						Offenses					
January	5	1	0	-100%		January	26	16	9	-7	-43.75%	Robbery	91	105	93	-12	-11%
February	2	3	2	-1	-33%	February	11	14	7	-7	-50.00%	Felony Assault	134	150	153	3	2%
March	4	3	2	-1	-25%	March	6	9	13	4	44.44%	Rape	109	122	106	-16	-12%
April	4	3	2	-1	-33%	April	13	19	5	-14	-73.68%	Burglary	305	240	210	-30	-13%
May	5	2	3	1	50%	May	9	12	0	0	-100.00%	Breaking and Entering	276	228	225	-3	-1%
Total	16	13	10	-3	-23%	Total	65	70	34	-36	-51.43%	Auto Theft	620	354	400	46	13%

Calls For Service					Park & Walk CFS				Firearms-related Offenses				Firearms Recovered							
Year	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change
Month																				
January	11382	10702	10378	-324	-3%	763	773	2705	1932	250%	253	260	206	-54	-21%	473	311	456	145	47%
February	10249	9908	10837	849	9%															
March	12055	10555	11707	1152	11%															
April	11861	10694	11536	842	9%															
May	12824	11919	12807	888	7%															
Total	58371	53858	57265	3407	6%															

Reported Use of Force Statistics					Complaints				
Use of Force Statistics	2023	2024	# Change	% Change	Month	2023	2024	# Change	% Change
Reported Use of Force Incidents	82	129	47	57%	Jan	1	3	2	200%
Total Assaults on Officer Incidents	14	13	-1	-7%	Feb	2	9	7	350%
Juveniles	14	24	10	71%	Mar	1	3	2	200%
Officers Injured in UOF	11	12	1	9%	Apr	1	2	1	100%
					May	6	5	-1	-17%
					Total	11	22	11	100%

There is a use of force incident roughly once every 444 ALL Calls (57,265 CFS) in 2024. (129 Uses of Force) There is a complaint roughly once every 3,369 ALL Calls in 2024. (22 complaints)

Source: Tyler RMS SQL for most data points. UOF and Complaints data from Patrol Ops. Date Ran: 6/6/2024

(Crime stats provided by Officer Brown.)

After Brown finished, Sommerville brought up the fact that cameras are scheduled to go up at the corner of [Raymond and Bartges](#). “They’ll actually probably be up in a week or two.” These cameras will have a live feed directly into the police station. “We’re really trying to crack down on crime and cleaning up that corner right there with the stores.”

- There was some disagreement between Sommerville and attendees about where the cameras will go — some believing that she had the wrong road names, based on the geography she described. The outcome was unclear.
- Sommerville further explained other ways they are trying to clean up that area, particularly certain buildings that are set to be demolished. She encouraged attendees to give her a list of properties that need to be addressed.

Once these concerns were addressed, Sommerville introduced the speaker, [Akron's Independent Police Auditor Anthony Finnell](#).

Finnell started by introducing himself, who he answers to, and his role, which in part is to review use-of-force incidents by APD officers. He also said he's "building out the office" with a deputy independent police auditor and an administrative assistant. He went on to describe his professional background, including that he was a police officer for almost 24 years before retiring and moving into civilian oversight of law enforcement. He has oversight experience all over the country and is the president of the [National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement](#).

A community member asked about working with the police union, mentioning qualified immunity. Finnell responded by saying: "The charter is specific on what my responsibilities are." Using the example of [Officer Ryan Westlake](#), he gave a truncated rundown of the process officers must go through to appeal a disciplinary action — in Westlake's case, termination.

"My role in that process is to, again, do my review and submit my report and my recommendations," Finnell said. "I can't issue discipline. I can't authorize discipline. But if I concur with the actions of the chief and the actions of the police department, that will be included in my report...If I do not concur, it will be a report."

He added: "I don't write reports for or against an officer or use of force with the intention of it going to a court, whether it's a criminal court, or a civil or an arbitration."

- The same community member asked a follow-up question, "Theoretically, he could still be put back on the job. No matter what you say or the police that fired him say, if the union says he goes back, he goes back. Then what?"
  - Finnell: "It's not that the union says he goes back, the union will fight to defend him. That is their responsibility. Just like if there was a criminal case. The defense attorney is going to fight to defend their client. The arbitrator, in that instance, will make that determination based on the evidence and what they hear in the arbitration hearing from the city and from the police union."

Another community member asked about Finnell's direct report. Finnell said he reports to the [Citizens' Police Oversight Board](#), but if you looked at an organizational chart, it would be under the mayor's office.

"In oversight, independence is key. So you will always have a connection to the city government — the city administration — in whatever city you're in, but you have to have the independence to make your rulings because sometimes my rulings or my decisions in my reports might not bode well for the city." He added: "I have to be transparent, I have to be ethical and just put the facts out there based on the evidence. So that's where the independence lies."

Another community member asked Finnell if he looks at systemic problems in the police force and if he's found any in Akron yet.

Finnell said that in his [latest report](#), he did speak to a systemic issue he has identified. He also stated that there are a couple he's been working on "in his short, 90-day period here." He then clarified that it was in his second report in which he called out an issue with supervision.

"In this instance, I believe it was a matter of poor supervision at the minimum and maybe something far worse on the other end, but that's yet to be determined. But there is a systemic issue where, I believe, supervisors try to mitigate officer misconduct instead of dealing with it head-on. And then there are some use-of-force practices that are questionable. There's nothing in the use-of-force policy that prevents these practices. But nonetheless, these practices in other jurisdictions that I've been part of would be classified as deadly force, but it's not classified that way."

He said there are three main aspects of his job:

- Make sure the process works — to identify and deal with officer misconduct
- Protect the community
- Protect the police with solid policies and practices

As an example, he brought up a policy he's examining right now: Akron's use-of-force policy doesn't prohibit or address hits/blows to the face or head.

"By not addressing it at all in our policy here, an officer could inadvertently kill someone or cause serious injury and then that officer could face an involuntary manslaughter or even a manslaughter charge and they haven't even been trained or taught not to do that," Finnell said. He said that this is one of the things he was referring to when he said his job is to protect the police AND the person and family that were the victims.

- He later said that he must look at the whole situation, not just the use-of-force incident itself, but everything that led up to it.

“Police fights, when they fight with people, are not pretty. At all. But sometimes they’re very necessary,” Finnell said. “So it’s my job to make sure that the appropriate level of force is used, the policies are followed. And that’s before the force is used, during the force, and even after the force is used.”

Someone asked if Finnell’s reports are made public. His reports are on the [CPOB website](#) with a caveat: He doesn’t include the incidents he agrees with. “Because there’s just so many.” When Finnell came into office, he had almost 300 cases to review.

“The majority that I have looked at, I have concurred with those findings,” he said.

The community member added, “If you are seeing so many that you haven’t found anything wrong with, I think that would bode well for the officers. Just to see that you have looked at what happened and you don’t find anything wrong with it.”

Finnell replied that, while they’re not on the website, he does report on them at the CPOB meetings. He also plans to have an annual report and would like to try to have a six-month report that would compile all the statistics and showcase everything the office has done/plans to do.

Another community member asked about “appropriate force”: How do you measure it and are there levels? Finnell explained that the police have training about appropriate levels of force in various situations like, according to Finnell, “When should they draw their weapon? When should they use a taser? When should they go hands-on? Or when should they just talk to someone?”

A community member brought up a recent [use-of-force incident in Canton](#) where someone who was being arrested died on the ground after stating he couldn’t breathe. He asked about APD’s policy if someone says they can’t breathe. Are they supposed to call EMS?

While Finnell said he doesn’t have any connection with that investigation, he said that many agencies are now teaching that if someone is handcuffed with their hands behind their back, they shouldn’t be left on their stomach, as keeping someone’s hands behind their back can restrict chest/lung movement and cause breathing issues. If people can’t breathe, their body automatically starts to move/fight to survive, and this can look like resisting. Rather, they should be moved into a “[recovery position](#).” Finnell doesn’t know if the policy says to call an ambulance, “but the policy does talk about moving a person into a recovery position as soon as possible.”

- A community member asked if this is part of the standard training for officers. Finnell responded that there are approximately 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the country and there isn't a standardized training (or policies) that applies to all agencies. Rather, they have state-mandated training that varies from state to state and some agencies might have their own academies.
- Finnell has spoken with [APD Chief Brian Harding](#) and the two of them, along with the CPOB, are working to make sure the use-of-force policy is the best way to serve the agency and serve the community. It's not something that can be a simple email because there are many factors that go into developing policy for the police department.

A community member, "In those types of conversations, in regards to policy, are you welcoming community members or groups to be a part of those conversations?"

Finnell said, "That will be part of it through the CPOB."

Another community member asked if the police have training in dealing with people who have mental health issues. Finnell said that it was part of the academy training as well as ongoing training. Brown spoke up to mention that officers with green pins have taken a week-long crisis intervention class put on by the [ADM Board](#). He also mentioned the [SCOUT Team](#) (which stands for Summit County Outreach Team and its Mobile Crisis Unit). Finnell added: "If they're just having a crisis, jail is not the place for them. It's the worst place for them."

Finnell finished his time by stating, "Whether [my] recommendations get implemented or not is really up to you guys. The mayor, the chief, the council, and I work for you."

Sommerville acknowledged that Council Member At-Large Linda Omobien was in attendance and thanked her for coming. Sommerville then introduced Edna Borders to speak about a weatherization program and Lead Safe Ohio. (Borders distributed flyers that are attached at the end of this document.) People can call or somebody will be in different libraries in July and August to speak to people one-on-one and help with forms.

A community member asked when the [Ed Davis Community Center is going to open](#). Sommerville said: "Hopefully this year."

Sommerville closed the meeting by mentioning that [Progressive Alliance](#) will be at next month's meeting. She also shared the results of a [Knight Foundation](#)-funded neighborhood study of the Sherbondy Hill Neighborhood and Copley Road.

The meeting ended at approximately 7:09 p.m.

# COUNTY OF SUMMIT HOME WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HWAP)

The Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) assists income qualified individuals to lower their energy usage.

HWAP may be able to provide the following services to income qualified Summit County residents:

- NEW ENERGY EFFICIENT FURNACE**
- NEW HOT WATER TANK**
- INSULATION**
- NEW REFRIGERATOR**
- NEW FREEZER**
- LED LIGHT BULBS**

An inspection is completed on each home to determine what services are needed. **HWAP is not** an emergency service, and applications are considered in the order in which they are approved.

**Services are completed at NO COST to the applicant.**

<b>THE CURRENT 2024 HOUSEHOLD INCOME GUIDELINES</b>			
<b>1 PERSON</b>	<b>2 PERSON</b>	<b>3 PERSON</b>	<b>4 PERSON</b>
<b>\$30,120</b>	<b>\$40,880</b>	<b>\$51,640</b>	<b>\$62,400</b>
<b>5 PERSON</b>	<b>6 PERSON</b>	<b>7 PERSON</b>	<b>8 PERSON</b>
<b>\$73,160</b>	<b>\$83,920</b>	<b>\$94,680</b>	<b>\$105,440</b>

Income guidelines are subject to change. Applicants must also be current on their property taxes.

**For more information contact HWAP staff at 330-643-2537**

Department of  
Community & Economic Development  
The Ohio Building  
175 S. Main St., Suite 207, Akron, Ohio 44308  
phone: 330-643-2537 • fax: 330-643-8249  
hours: Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



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COUNTY EXECUTIVE

[co.summitoh.net](http://co.summitoh.net)

# Community Development Office Hours

## Apply on-site for:

- **Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP)**
  - Furnaces, hot water tanks, insulation, air sealing
- **Home First Loan**
  - Down payment assistance
- **Septic System Replacement**
- **Minor Home Repair Program**
- **Lead Abatement and Lead Safe Programs**

### **Cuyahoga Falls Library**

June 3, July 1, August 5  
10am-12pm

### **Barberton Public Library**

June 4, July 2, August 6  
12pm-5pm

### **Springfield-Lakemore Branch**

June 10, July 8, August 12  
12pm-4pm

### **North Hill Branch**

June 11, July 9, August 13  
12pm-4pm

### **Tallmadge Branch**

June 12, July 10, August 14  
12pm-4pm

### **Main Library**

June 13, July 11, August 8  
12pm-4pm

### **Odom Blvd Branch**

June 14, July 12, August 9  
12pm-4pm

### **Kenmore Branch**

June 17, July 15, August 19  
12pm-4pm

**For more info,  
contact Rochelle at  
rgorman@summitoh.net  
or (330) 643-2561.**

### **Firestone Park Branch**

June 18, July 14, August 20  
12pm-4pm

### **Twinsburg Public Library**

June 19, July 17, August 21  
1pm-5pm

### **Highland Square Branch**

June 20, July 18, August 15  
12pm-4pm

### **Maple Valley Branch**

June 28, July 26, August 23  
12pm-4pm

### **Stow-Munroe Falls Library**

June 6 & 20, July 18,  
August 1, 15, & 29  
12pm-5pm

**Can't make it?  
Scan the code  
to self-refer for  
the programs  
above:**



Stow • Munroe Falls  
**PublicLibrary**



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COUNTY EXECUTIVE

# LEAD SAFE OHIO

Get help with window & door replacement, siding & soffit enclosure, porch component repairs, lead cleaning efforts, and more!

- **NO LEAD TEST NEEDED**
- **FOR HOMES WITH OR WITHOUT CHILDREN**
- **AVAILABLE COUNTYWIDE**

*Eligible Summit County homeowners can apply at:*

*[co.summitoh.net/pages/Housing-Rehabilitation-Program.html](http://co.summitoh.net/pages/Housing-Rehabilitation-Program.html)*



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anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at [documenters@signalakron.org](mailto:documenters@signalakron.org) with "Correction Request" in the subject line.