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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ASHEVILLE, NC- On the night of August 24–25, 2017, a local resident was brutally beaten by an Asheville Police Officer. Although the incident occurred in August, neither the public nor City Council learned of it until February 28, 2018, when a [body camera video](#) of the assault was provided to the Asheville Citizen-Times. In the days since the initial release, the incident has received national attention and caused significant outrage in the Asheville community.

Code for Asheville, with the support of other community groups, has started a petition seeking reforms to increase the transparency and accountability of our police department. “We hope to play a constructive role in addressing the structural issues that underlie the incident by creating a formal request for the timely release of critical datasets related to public safety. The release of these datasets will provide additional accountability within the Police Department, and the commitment to transparency by our city will start the long process of rebuilding community trust in our Police Department,” said Patrick Conant, a Code For Asheville member.

Patrick Conant will present the full request at the City of Asheville Public Safety Committee on Monday, March 26th at 3:30pm.

Data transparency, on its own, will not solve issues of trust and accountability in Asheville. Nor is it a substitute for the wider work necessary to improve equity and justice throughout our city. However, this petition offers some initial common-sense steps to move our city in the right direction. As noted by the [Police Data Initiative](#) in a [recent post](#) on the value of releasing use-of-force data:

When data is open, community members are empowered to assess the data directly. Releasing open data is more than a gesture of goodwill and trust on behalf of law enforcement agencies; it is a shrewd use of resources and a means of enlisting communities to solve some of their most entrenched crime problems. As such, it is a key component in the co-production of public safety.

Our request is in line with the City’s [Open Data Policy](#), adopted in October 2015, as well as the March 5 statement by City Manager Gary Jackson that there is “strong direction... from the City Council that in all matters, especially those involving police, the City should be as transparent as possible to its citizens.”

The request has been endorsed by [Faith 4 Justice](#), [BeLoved Asheville](#), [Sunlight Foundation](#), and [Code for America](#).

[View the Petition](#)

[View Code for Asheville’s full request](#)

### About Code for Asheville

*The Code for Asheville brigade is a volunteer civic technology organization, one of the first of over 80 local chapters of Code for America. We mobilize a network of talented, civic-minded individuals who bring technology and data know-how to help communities and local governments work better. We facilitate data-driven conversations about community issues, advocate for transparency and access to open data, and help create tools to address community problems.*

