

REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
JANUARY 9, 2024
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT
VIDEOCONFERENCE AND CONFERENCE CALL VIA ZOOM

PRESENT: Commissioners Darrell Brooks, Tracey Meares, Isais Miranda, Evelise Ribeiro and Donald Walker

Chief Karl Jacobson: Department of Police Service
Assistant Chief Manmeet Bhagtana: Department of Police Service
Assistant Chief Bertram Ettienne: Department of Police Service
Lieutenant Jessie Agosto: Department of Police Service
Lieutenant Dana Smith: Department of Police Service
Sergeant Paul Finch: Department of Police Service
D. Cohen: Department of Police Service
Asia Johnson-Clark: Administrative Assistant

Chief Anthony Campbell: Yale Police Department
Captain Rose Dell
Michelle Duprey, Esquire: Deputy Corporation Counsel
Regina Rush-Kittle: Chief Administrative Officer

Daniel Hunt
Miguel Pittman, Sr.

OPEN SESSION

The Regular Session meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners was called to order at 6:02 p.m., Evelise Ribeiro, Chair, presiding.

Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that Commissioner Lawlor would not be joining the meeting.

AGENDA

- ** Commissioner Meares motioned to approve the Agenda for January 9, 2024
- ** Commissioner Walker seconded
- ** Motion passed unanimously

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Discussion and Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2023

- ** Commissioner Meares moved the motion to Approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2023
- ** Commissioner Walker seconded

Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that there were a few scrivener's errors. The minutes indicated it was a special meeting instead of a regular meeting.

- ** Commissioner Meares amended the motion to Approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2023 with the corrections
- ** Commissioner Walker seconded
- ** Motion passed unanimously

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Karl Jacobson

- Chief Jacobson greeted everyone.
- He shared the year-end CompStat report on the screen.
- The report encompassed crime trends for the past four years. In 2023 there were 23 homicides, 76 non-fatal shootings and 282 confirmed firearm discharges. Besides homicides, the other categories were significantly down. Assaults with firearms was down by over 30 percent.
- Over this four-year period, violent crime was down by 28 percent. Property crime is up. If you look at the motor vehicle theft category, there were 1,219 stolen cars compared to 754 in 2023, a 69.1 percent reduction.
- The Department is expanding its capabilities to try to get the numbers down. They will be working with the Connecticut State Police, Car Crime Task Force. Cameras are being used to recover stolen cars. The Department has recovered many cars due to different techniques being utilized. They will be rolling out new techniques to combat motor vehicle theft.
- The final total for motor vehicle stops in 2023 was 11,069 compared to 6,968 car stops in 2022. That is a 58.9 percent increase.
- You will also see in the Internal Affairs complaint reports that complaints are down. The use of forces are significantly down.
- Gun arrests in 2023 are even higher than 2022 which was a record year.
- His interpretation is even though the Department has less officers, they are working hard. The officers are doing what they need to do to combat these problems.
- Chief Jacobson indicated he wanted to touch on hiring and retention issues. In 2022 the Department hired 32 people. In 2023 there were 38 new hires. So that's 70 new hires over the last two years.
- Commissioner Walker had asked previously how many officers had left the Department. He showed the chart indicating the number of officers that had left. In 2023 fifty officers left the Department. In 2022 twenty-five officers left the Department. In 2022 seven officers left, meaning they resigned and went to other police departments. In 2023 there were 23 officers that resigned and went to other police departments. In 2022 twelve officers retired. In 2023 the full 20 officers retired and perhaps up to 22 retired.
- Five officers were terminated in 2023 and three officers were terminated in 2022.
- Although, the Department gained 70 officers, it lost 75 officers. This is the Department's greatest struggle.
- However, the Department is doing a lot of things related to recruitment and retention. The union and City of New Haven are working hard to get the contract done.

- Commissioner Meares indicated she had two questions regarding the data presented, one on the motor vehicle thefts and the second on car stops.
- Motor vehicle stops are way up by almost 70 percent. She wanted Chief Jacobson to say a little bit more about what she would call a permanent loss versus a situation where it somewhere between a joy ride or the car is taken and abandoned and then the owner actually gets their car back and can use it versus you find the car but it's stripped. She asked what Chief Jacobson was talking about in this category.
- Chief Jacobson responded by saying that the 1,219 number is just for stolen cars.
- Commissioner Meares interjected by saying, no matter what.
- Chief Jacobson agreed, the number was for stolen cars no matter what. He further stated that he could provide that data broken down in the way Commissioner Meares asked. He had never broken it down that way.
- Chief Jacobson added that larceny from motor vehicle is just that the perpetrators broke into cars and stole something. The statistics is up from last year but is pretty consistent over the four-year span.
- Commissioner Meares indicated that she was interested because from what they are seeing and the other things that she does research on in terms of social media influence and the like, having a car stolen outright and then someone using it and taking it away is a different problem from having this car stolen and stripped for parts or having the car stolen by kids who are going do whatever nonsense they do.
- Commissioner Meares further stated that it would be interesting to see what the biggest component is. She didn't want to say driving it because, in fact, as she looked at the last three years, and as a big fan of the three-year trend, it's pretty flat until this year. So it would be interesting to see if there is some distinctive component that's driving that even to the point of the kind of car, right, because like you hear, it's all about Hyundai's. She didn't know if that was true.
- Chief Jacobson replied by saying that both of Commissioner Meares' points were right on. There was a something on TikTok on how to steal Kia's and Hyundai's. And that blew up throughout the country. Those cars were easier to take. It made it almost impossible to not have those cars stolen. He would venture to say that the increase in car theft would have something to do with car brands.
- One of the district managers handed out wheel locks to owners of these cars. The Department handed out these wheel locks. There was a small decline in his area but then it shot back up again. If those types of gadgets are used, there needs to be public awareness and handing out the wheel locks.
- Chief Jacobson further stated that Commissioner Meares was right about the influence of social media where they learn how to steal cars easily. The Department has to counter that through social media to increase public awareness and to give inform that they can get free wheel locks at the Department.
- Commissioner Meares said her second question had to do with vehicle stops which were significantly higher in 2023 than 2022. The way she saw those numbers was that it is actually a measure of just police activity as a general matter. So then the question is: What is that police activity directed towards? She, personally, wouldn't necessarily be super happy about a ton of car stops unless I knew that it is connected to something. She would also want to know about the distribution of where the car stops are.

■ For example, if it is car stops directed at speeding, in areas that have serious problems, then she would be happy about that. However, if the car stops are directed at basically a sort of discrediting theory about the way car stops actually address violent crimes, then she is less happy about it. While she was speaking on this topic, she would say, as most in the meeting know, she had spent the last few months in New York City while on Sabbatical. She has been home a few times. Every single time she had come home, kind of a random draw that's interesting, she has seen at least one and usually multiple people running stop lights. It is insane how many people run through the red lights in the East Rock area.

■ Commissioner Meares added that she would like more information, to the extent Chief Jacobson had one, on the traffic cameras.

■ Chief Jacobson indicated that the motor vehicle stops were increased by adding more people to the traffic unit. The traffic unit's main purpose is what Commissioner Meares just said, stop signal violations and slowing people down. There was a huge spike in motor vehicle deaths in 2021 leading into 2022. Those extra stops are supported by data indicating where accidents are occurring, where stolen cars are and the areas. Believe it or not, some of the kids in stolen cars do actually pull over. The officers are able to make safe apprehensions. They are also using the StarChase device and Stop Stick to safely stop cars.

■ By using all these technology available in addition to cameras, the officers are being empowered to do more in order to make the roads safer. They are good stops because in 2023 there were 11,609 stops but the Department has less Internal Affairs complaints and substantially less use of force. That data can be linked. He was very happy about that.

■ Officers were sent to an area that had a lot of drag racing in addition to other issues such as violent crimes. Violent crime went down in addition to the safety issues in that area. Again, those interactions didn't lead to complaints or uses of force.

■ Chief Jacobson reiterated that for the next meeting he would provide the breakdown Commissioner Meares requested. It is really interesting.

■ The Department is doing more motor vehicle stops but for the right reasons and getting better results.

■ Commissioner Meares stated that that was just the kind of context she wanted to hear.

■ Assistant Chief Ettiienne added that whenever the Department starts the Field Training program, motor vehicle stops go up. There are lots of motor vehicle stops that happen during that FTO phase.

■ Chief Jacobson responded by saying that this is because the officers are being taught how to do it, where to do it and are being taught the right way.

■ Commissioner Brooks asked Chief Jacobson to describe for him what neighborhood District 10 was.

■ Chief Jacobson indicated that it is Beaver Hills. Like Crescent Street is one border and Whalley Avenue is another border which reaches up just to border Westville and reaches down to Newhallville.

■ Chief Jacobson asked Commissioner Walker if he had addressed Commissioner Walker's question about why people were leaving.

■ Commissioner Walker said Chief Jacobson had responded to his inquiry. He added that it is a continuous fight to get more officers. In his opinion, until there is a contract, this trend is not going to change.

■ Chief Jacobson added that the Department could be in worse shape but people like Sergeant Finch and his crew have done an immaculate job and the Board have helped the Department

hire more people, giving people chances that might not have been given chances. Most of those are working out great. He really appreciates the collaboration between backgrounds, the Board and Internal Affairs. Everything is working in the right direction for the Department.

■ Commissioner Walker concurred with Chief Jacobson. Sergeant Finch is like a Pitbull when it comes to recruiting. He is everywhere. Sergeant Finch's tenacity is admirable. He is like a recruiting superman especially with regard to the training for potential hires to help them pass the tests. They out in the field, weather permitting, all the time a few times a week getting people in shape, encouraging and motivating people. It is a credit to Sergeant Finch and the people he works with.

■ Sergeant Finch thanked Commissioner Walker.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS REPORT

Lieutenant Dana Smith

■ Lieutenant Smith began by saying that he had no statistics to share just because it is the beginning of the year. However, he does have two closed cases.

On Friday May 13 of 2022 Ms. Taliaferro submitted a complaint to Interna Affairs. She documented that her adult son, Mr. Issac Pride, was approached and questioned by the police inside the Top Kat Laundromat located at 1289 Whalley Avenue. Officer Vernik explained to Mr. Pride and Ms. Taliaferro the reason the officers were asking Mr. Pride for his identification. Ms. Taliaferro told the officer that she did not understand why Mr. Pride was being targeted. The officers tried to explain again the circumstances of why they were speaking with Mr. Pride. In a thorough review of the body-worn camera footage associated with the investigation, the investigator did not notice any misconduct on the part of the Officer Vernik. The situation was unfounded.

IA Case No. 23C-059: On December 4th of '23, Internal Affairs received a complaint from Ms. Shaquilla McMillian. Ms. McMillian stated in her complaint form that she called in a parking complaint. The officer arrived after the vehicle had already left but she did not receive a complaint number nor did the officer speak with the neighbor about the parking complaint. The body-worn camera footage showed Officer Zullo did speak with the complainant who briefly showed him a photo on the phone, presumably, of the offending vehicle but there was no vehicle on scene when he arrived. He informed her that since there was no vehicle on scene he could not speak to anyone. Per her complaint, the neighbor had came out to speak with her and stated that she should have knocked on the door and raised her concerns to her, but she replied, it was not her job. After having completed the investigation, which included but was not limited to the thorough review of the incident/supplemental reports (CAD notes), body-worn camera footage, and audio recordings of the interviews with the complainant, this investigation was determined that it did not occur. This was also unfounded

PERSONNEL MATTERS

1. Chief Karl Jacobson is requesting approval by the Board of Police Commissioners to send 3 Conditional Offers of employment for the position of Police Officer, Eligibility List 22-68CR 12/20/23:

- a. #1 Tamiya Corbin
- b. #2 Kenneth Ney
- c. #3 Tyler Osborne

** Commissioner Walker motioned to send three conditional offers from Eligibility List 22-68CR 12/20/23 to Tamiya Corbin, Kenneth Ney and Tyler Osborne
** Commissioner Meares seconded
** Motion passed unanimously

2. Discussion and action on the recommendation from Chief Anthony Campbell, Yale Police Department, to hire the following candidate to the Yale Police Department:

- a. Rose Dell

Chief Campbell spoke briefly about former Captain Rose Dell of the New Haven Police Department and that the request to hire her be approved. He further stated that if she was approved to go to Yale, she would be the Department's first female assistance chief in its 130-year history.

Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that some commissioners had the opportunity to interview former Captain Dell.

Former Captain Dell indicated she looked forward to working with the Yale University Police Department and facilitating collaborations with the New Haven Police Department.

** Commissioner Walker motioned to adhere to Chief Campbell's request to hire former Captain Dell into Yale Police Department as Assistant Chief
** Commissioner Brooks seconded
** Motion passed unanimously

Chief Campbell and former Captain Dell were congratulated.

RETIREMENTS (For Board information only)

Sergeant Christopher Cameron, eff., December 31, 2023
Sergeant Martin Feliciano, eff., December 31, 2023
Officer Sean Sullivan, eff., December 31, 2023
Sergeant Carlos Conceicao, eff., December 31, 2023
Captain Rose Dell, eff., December 31, 2023
Officer Joseph Manganiello, eff., December 31, 2023
Lieutenant Jason Rentkowicz, eff., December 31, 2023
Officer Richard Burgos, eff., December 31, 2023
Lieutenant Justin Marshall, eff., December 31, 2023

RESIGNATION (For Board information only)

Officer Joseph Schwab, eff., January 17, 2024

RECRUITMENT/SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

Sergeant Paul Finch

■ Sergeant Finch indicate that the next scheduled written examination would take place on January 10, 2024 with the South Central Criminal Justice Association. There are 50 candidates scheduled to take the examination.

■ This number is up from last year. There were 66 people scheduled to attend last year and 31 people showed up. He hoped all fifty would show up for the next examination so the Department could continue their progress regarding hiring more police officers for the city.

■ He had spoken to all the three candidates who are receiving conditional offers, as approved by the Board earlier. They are excited for the opportunity.

■ The next academy class that the Department can send new hires to is in April. It is a POST residential academy in Meriden. The Department is looking to put as many people as they can in that academy after a thorough background check.

■ Recruitment is ongoing. They have been having some good discussions with the city's Human Resources Department regarding out-of-state lateral transfers and in-state lateral transfers. They are trying to tighten that up a little bit more.

■ They have had a tough time with in-state transfers just because of the contract not being so competitive. They might attract people wanting to return to Connecticut or from the NYPD. The hope is the new contract will make the Department more competitive.

■ Commissioner Meares asked if in attracting the out-of-state folks, there would still be the rule that if you come from out of state, the individual has to completely start over.

■ Sergeant Finch responded by saying that there is a comparative process through POST whereby every month a candidate can go before the POST Council with the jacket the candidate has come from. The New Haven Police Department will present the candidate to POST. POST will then let the Department know what classes the individual will have to take. The Department could then streamline it through its academy.

■ Chief Jacobson added that he came from Rhode Island and did not have to do the full academy. He did two months of the academy and a lot of stuff that was never covered in Rhode Island like the community policing aspects and everything else and, of course, Connecticut law. After two months he was released from POST and was able to take some classes as he took the FTO. He had 10 years of service prior, however.

■ Commissioner Meares added that he also lost his seniority. She also added she would be curious to see how competitive the Department would be given that an individual would lose his/her seniority coming from another state.

■ Sergeant Finch replied by saying that he had had some inquiries. The biggest thing he had seen is that some people want to get out of New York City. Others are from Connecticut and they want to return to be closer to home. They are starting to have children and all that.

■ Sergeant Finch indicated that perhaps one thing for the Department to consider is allowing candidates to be able to buy back some of their time so that way the Department can be more attractive in that way.

■ Commissioner Meares stated she would let all know on the record that what Connecticut does is not necessarily difficult in that regard. She is not saying that it is unique or unusual but it more difficult to attract people from out of state.

■ Chief Jacobson added that he was aware that Danbury had taken in like 50 New York City former officers that moved to Connecticut. There is a demand. Maybe we can pick some of

those officers. There are other officers who want to return to Connecticut as they are starting their families. In contract negotiations there have been discussions surrounding buyback for police time. That may help too.

EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE REPORT

Consideration and vote on the proposed General Order 8.03 Domestic violence
Consideration and vote on proposed General Order 8.09 Warrants

Consideration and vote on the proposed General Order 8.03 Domestic violence

■ Lieutenant Agosto indicated that the main difference in the General Order 8.03 is the new law that requires courts to put TPS or offer the TPS device program for violent domestic offenders. This program is for offenders who have standing protective orders and restraining orders and have committed violent domestic offenses. The victims would have to agree. Basically, a GPS monitor would be attached to the offender. A zone can be established where they are not go to. If there is a violation of the indicated zone, a call will go the call center. The call center will then reach out to the victim. The conversation between the call center and the victim could also occur via a hub that is placed in the victim's home. The call center will then contract the Department as a follow-up to ensure the offender is not in the area. The alert is part of the probable cause for an arrest should the offender violate the restricted zone.

■ This was the language that was given to the Department. The Department has to be compliant.

■ Commissioner Brooks asked if the GPS was mandatory or not.

■ Lieutenant Agosto indicated it is mandatory to offer the program. However, the victim needs to agree to it as it is quite invasive as there is a hub that can be placed in the home and home in addition to a mobile hub they can carry on their person.

■ Commissioner Brooks asked if this is for individuals who have exhibited a propensity for violence towards the victims. Lieutenant Agosto replied, yes.

■ Commissioner Brooks stated that he wondered why this didn't have a little more teeth particularly for those with a history of violence towards their spouses or partners.

■ Lieutenant Agosto indicated the idea is not to impose this on the victims.

■ Commissioner Meares indicated it was a privacy violation.

■ Lieutenant Agosto indicated that the victim would have to waive their privacy.

■ Commissioner Meares indicated that it was another measure to enforce the protective order. In order for this to work, the locations of both the violator and the victim have to be known at all times. They may not want that intrusion.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro stated for the record that the title of the General Order was changed from Domestic Violence to Family/Domestic Violence

■ Lieutenant Agosto indicated that the change of the title was at the suggestion of Commissioner Meares just to make sure there is a clarification that family violence and domestic violence all fall under the same category.

Consideration and vote on proposed General Order 8.09 Warrants

■ Lieutenant Agosto indicated that the Arrest General Order was more for accreditation purposes. The standard through POST 1.7.20 says the Department has to have a written directive that establishes procedures for arrest situations to include the following situations, so arrest warrants, arrests without warrants, alternatives to arrests, pre-arraignment, confinement and release, forced entry to arrest, and out-of-town arrest warrants. This General Order will cover those standards.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that since it was just a new General Order, there would be notation stating it's new.

** Commissioner Meares moved to accept the changes to General Order 8.03 on Family/Domestic Violence

** Commissioner Walker seconded

■ Commissioner Brooks indicated that he hated to belabor the point but he just wished there were ways to ensure the safety of victims without the violation of their privacies on this policy but it is what it is. He just wanted to make note of that.

■ Lieutenant Agosto added that Bridgeport, Hartford and Danielson have been doing the pilot program for this since 2010. And the consensus seems to be that the GPS does tend to work as a deterrent more than just the piece of paper. So it does make a difference, if that makes you feel more reassured.

■ Commissioner Brooks indicated it did.

■ Lieutenant Agosto said the Department is continuing to look for ways to help victims. This is one of the Department's priorities. The Department would like to do more as well.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that whoever is attending to the victim by offering this service can encourage the victims to participate. It could be life-saving.

■ Commissioner Meares indicated she wanted to point out that Lieutenant Agosto indicated that there are different options. So the victim can have the hub in the house and workplace. There is also a mobile unit. There are varying levels of intrusion on privacy. It is worth noting that these are cases in which there are protective orders. She understood where Commissioner Brook was coming from but it might be selling protective orders short to say that like they do nothing unless there's a GPS thing attached to them. Although, I am with you, I think this is an added layer of protective.

■ Commissioner Brooks indicated that there is data to say that sometimes protective orders just do not work.

■ Commissioner Meares said Commissioner Brooks was right.

** Motion passed unanimously

■ Commissioner Walker indicated that these are tools. No tool is perfect, but if it improves safety for victims of domestic violence until something better comes along, it is a good thing. This is another tool moving us further.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that things are always evolving. We can always update our General Order.

Consideration and vote on proposed General Order 8.09 Warrants

** Commissioner Meares moved to approve General Order 8.09 on Warrants. It is a new General Order and is necessary in order for us to be in compliance with POST requirements

** Commissioner Walker seconded

** Motion passed unanimously

■ Commissioner Ribeiro asked for an update on the accreditation process.

■ Chief Jacobson thanked Lieutenant Agosto for all the work she did on this. The Department will be submitting everything by January 11th, 2024 which is the deadline. The Department had submitted an extension because they will probably not get to reading all that Lieutenant Agosto had put together. This is for Tier I which has to be completed by January 11th, 2024 after which there is a two-year period to get to Tier II. This Tier will begin afterwards.

■ Lieutenant Agosto indicated that the deadline is officially January 11th, 2024. The Department did request an extension in case it is needed to get the reviewing of all the new General Orders and memos to cover the standards which in the next two years turn into the Department's General Orders as they review them and put them together. They will have POST come up here to review everything and have the Department formally accredited for Tier I. In November of 2024 they have a review/preview for Tier II. This has to be completed by November of 2025. By November of 2026, the Department has to complete Tier III. And then the Department will be fully accredited.

■ Commissioner Meares asked how long the extension was for.

■ Lieutenant Agosto responded by saying that an actual date had not been given to them yet.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro requested that a list of all the SOPs that were signed and memos and copies be submitted to Commissioner Meares who will in turn share it with the full Board.

■ Commissioner Meares indicated that that would help them map their next steps.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

There was none.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was none.

■ Attorney Duprey indicated that she would like some feedback from the commissioner regarding what types of information they would like to see from her office.

ADJOURNMENT

** Commissioner Meares moved to Adjourn the Regular Meeting

** Commissioner Walker seconded

** Motion passed unanimously

The next regular meeting will be on February 13, 2024

The Board adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sotonye Otunba-Payne', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Sotonye Otunba-Payne