

**REGULAR SESSION MINUTES**  
**JULY 13, 2021**  
**BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS**  
**NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT**  
***VIDEOCONFERENCE AND CONFERENCE CALL VIA ZOOM***

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Michael Lawlor; Tracey Meares; Evelise Ribeiro;  
and Donald Walker

Interim Chief Dominguez: Department of Police Service  
Assistant Chief Carl Jacobson: Department of Police Service  
Captain David Zannelli: Department of Police Service  
Sergeant Yelena Borisova: Department of Police Service  
Sergeant Dana Smith: Department of Police Service  
Officer Reginald McGlotten: Department of Police Service  
Officer Raul Pereira: Department of Police Service  
Ramon Davis: Administrative Assistant II  
Eva Perry-Lambert

Michelle Duprey, Esquire: Deputy Corporation Counsel

Shafiq Abdussabur  
Danielle Allwood  
Scott Anastasia  
Monica Bell  
Frank Capozzi  
Tyler Evans  
Stephanie James  
Jordan Lytle  
Andrea Moore  
Samantha Otero  
Don  
Daniel's iPhone  
Emery  
Galaxy Sa  
iPhone

**OPEN SESSION**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m., Evelise Ribeiro, Chair, presiding.  
The meeting began late because the Ms. Otunba-Payne had technical issues. She apologized.

**AGENDA**

- \*\* Commissioner Lawlor moved to Approve the Agenda
- \*\* Commissioner Meares seconded
- \*\* Motion passed unanimously

## **DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- \*\* Commissioner Lawlor moved to Approve the June 8, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes
- \*\* Commissioner Walker seconded
- \*\* Motion passed unanimously

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

■ Ms. Monica Bell, a resident of 360 State Street, commented that there was an emergency lockdown at the said address in response to a mental health call. She thought it was a call regarding someone threatening suicide. She had a lot of question regarding what happened and concerns. She was concerned as a member of the public that a large shutdown was called for due to mental health call. The SWAT team and hostage negotiators were called as well. It seemed like it would have been more fitting to have something like co-responder model or something like that given that allegedly there was a gun involved.

■ Ms. Bell further stated that she had a broader concern given that she resides in one of the apartment buildings. And it was time that wellness checks were going to done. Either it didn't occur or it was understood that this person was not real. So, there's a lack of clarity regarding what happened there. So, she was in attendance more for some clarification. She wanted proposals about better ways of handling calls of that nature going forward. She was curious about any potential policy changes that the police department was thinking about in that vein.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro asked if Ms. Bell was seeking clarification for that particular incident or the overall policy when a call like that comes to the Department.

■ Ms. Bell indicated she was asking about both.

■ Commissioner Meares asked if there were over 500 units at 360 State Street. Ms. Bell replied that she was correct.

■ Commissioner Meares said when Ms. Bell said lockdown, she meant everybody in the building was told that they couldn't leave their apartments.

■ Ms. Bell said there was an e-mail sent in all caps to all 500-plus units that they needed to stay in their apartments. And it was explained kind of in several e-mails over time that the police department was on site. She thought it was possibly an active shooter or something like that given the nature of the communications. Then they were told that the police department was doing wellness checks and this was around 11:17 p.m. or thereabouts. And then at 1:21 a.m., the community got an all-clear e-mail from the office managing the building. At about 8:00 a.m. the office explained that the police department was doing its work. They thought there was a mental health concern but they needed to exercise due diligence and to explain the lockdown. But it was in fact the case that all of us were required to stay in our apartment from about 9:19 p.m. to 1:21 a.m. with no explanation of what was going on. Further details were not shared with the residents in the apartment building.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that in the interest of time she would ask the Chief or her designee to briefly respond to her questions. If Ms. Bell gives the Board her name and contact information, they would get back to her with the particulars and advise the residents in the building accordingly.

■ Chief Dominguez suggested that Ms. Bell type her contact information in the chat. They can connect offline and she could go into more details. The Department received a call for an emotionally distressed individual. The information was received from a third party. So, the

Department was having issues as to whether the individual was in fact located at 360 State Street or not. It was a very long process. The Department did not have a resolution that evening as to where the person was. However, they were finally able to determine that the person was not in the building. The following day they had a call from this individual. They believe more is going on. The hostage negotiator was there because he/she is part of their crises team who would have been able to negotiate mental health issues. They stayed on the phone for probably eight hours with this individual trying to determine where he in fact was located. They are unsure why the 360 State Street address came up. The Department exhausted all means and used all its federal partners to pinpoint where this individual in fact was located.

■ Chief Dominguez went on to say that the only reason for the lockdown was because initially the only information they had was a mental distressed individual in the building and it was for the safety of the others while they were trying to locate this individual. She indicated she would be glad to speak with Ms. Bell the following day. The Department released a statement that night. The management company was trying to communicate with the residents. She indicated that they would like to hear Ms. Bell's thoughts on ways they could have done better keeping in mind that the safety of residents is always the Departments first priority.

■ Commissioner Meares indication that in addition to this specific incident, the Efficiency Committee is undertaking a policy review. She would like the particular policies that the officers were following in order to respond to this incident. It should be identified as a general matter. She understood what Chief Dominguez said. It might be that there are better ways to keep people safe. This was 500 units locked with no information in the context from which we live. Some policy review is in order.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro asked that Chief Dominguez send the policy to the Efficiency Committee and cc her in terms of the particular policy or policies for this incident just the Board's review.

■ Commissioner Lawlor asked if there was ever a sense that this individual might have been armed with a firearm. He thought somebody said that.

■ Chief Dominguez said, yes, there was a sense that this individual was armed with a firearm.

■ Commissioner Lawlor indicated this was a very important factor to be aware of in determining the appropriateness of the response.

■ Chief Dominguez indicated she would be happy to discuss with the Board offline. She would give more information to Ms. Bell as well.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that if this information was pertinent for the public to hear now, she would allow further explanation. However, if it was something that the Chief had to look into further, that is fine.

■ Chief Dominguez indicated that what was released to the public was pretty much what she had said earlier without getting too much into the details of the case for obvious reasons.

## **CHIEF'S REPORT**

Chief Renee Dominguez

■ Chief Dominguez indicated she would highlight some good things that have happened over the week. The New Haven Police Department and the training academy had a bicycle crash investigation training. They had 35 officers from all over the tri-state. Individuals from New Jersey, Maine, Massachusetts were in attendance. It was an SRR Training also run by NESPIN (New England State Police Information Network). There have been lots of bicycle fatalities to

be able to do accident reconstruction in order to give officers a little bit more investigatory skills and to come up with ways to prevent future crashes. It was a five-day training course heavy on reconstruction, how to look at them, mathematical models and formulas and also human factors that can contribute to some collisions and how to better prevent these in the future. So, it was a great class by three of the Department's officers from the accident reconstruction team. It was great to bring the training to Connecticut. It is good to see officers come from other agencies to New Haven to see what the Department is doing and to network with the officers who are doing the work in the field.

■ Chief Dominguez added that the motor unit has been expanded to the evening shift. During the pandemic the Department was unable to get these officers certified regard the motorcycle operators' course. There were three officers from the Department along with 12 other officers around the state. They graduated successfully from the program. It was an intense three-week program. There were a lot of bumps and bruises. And Officer Ramirez of the Department was the top rider. And he was recognized as the top performer in the three-way course which is something very, very difficult to come out on top because the course is very difficult. They had been practicing for months and months especially during the pandemic. So, there are three more official motorcycle operators who are in the city.

■ Chief Dominguez indicated that there were 60 non-fatal shootings to date and 17 homicides. This time last year, there were 56 non-fatal shootings and 12 homicides. The Department is well aware of the work that needs to be done. The Department is continuing to exert efforts to combat violence with a complete department-wide strategy. Since January 1, 2021 the Department has seized 96 guns and made 94 arrests and six more arrests are pending. That is more than they did at the same time last year. Even with the number of seizures and arrests, the violence persists. The Department is working with its partners, such the court, Probation, Parole to continue to think outside the box and use strategies that are known to have worked in the past. The Department is finally beginning to see a decrease. The numbers compared to previous years are still high. However, the Department is seeing results because the numbers are beginning to level off. At the beginning of February, March and April the numbers peaked compared to previous years. The goal is to see the numbers decline to the numbers in the past.

■ The Department is going to have a Project Safe Neighborhoods call-in on July 26, 2021 whereby about 35 individuals would be called. The Department has stepped up the number of calls. They are doing both Project Longevity and Project Safe Neighborhoods (runs every other month). In the off months the Project Longevity call-in are done.

■ This is talked about much too often. However, being able to do notifications and provide resources to individuals is very important. Having information about the people who are going to be victims of violent crimes or perpetrators of violent crimes is what helps the Department. Lack of resources sometimes is the reason the violence continues to persist.

## **PERSONNEL MATTERS**

1. Discussion and action on the recommendation to remove the following candidate from Eligibility List #21-13:
  1. #1 - Omar Thomas
  2. #3 - Jordan Lytle
  3. #4 - Frank Capozzi

- Chief Dominguez indicated that Candidate Omar Thomas had withdrawn.
- Commissioner Ribeiro asked if all the candidates were present and whether they would like to have an opportunity to address the Board; and if so, would it be in an open or closed session.
- Sergeant Dana Smith indicated that there were six candidates out of the eight candidates listed for that evening. Candidates Stephanie James and Christopher McElroen were absent. The candidates that were present have requested to be heard in a closed session.
- Commissioner Ribeiro asked Candidates Lytle and Capozzi if they wanted to be heard in an open or closed session. Both opted for a closed session. She went to explain what open and closed session means.

\*\* **Commissioner Lawlor moved to Enter Executive Session for the Removal of Candidates from the Eligibility List #21-13**  
 \*\* **Commissioner Walker seconded**  
 \*\* **Motion passed unanimously**

**The Board entered Executive Session at 6:28 p.m.**

\*\* **Commissioner Meares moved to Exit Executive Session**  
 \*\* **Commissioner Walker seconded**  
 \*\* **Motion passed unanimously**

**The Board exited Executive Session at 7:16 p.m.**

\*\* Commissioner Walker Motioned to Remove Candidate Jordan Lytle from Eligibility List #21-13  
 \*\* Commissioner Meares seconded  
 \*\* For: None  
 \*\* Against: Commissioners Lawlor, Meares, Ribeiro and Walker

The motion failed.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that this meant Mr. Lytle would move forward in the process.

\*\* Commissioner Walker Motioned to Remove Candidate Frank Capozzi from Eligibility List #21-13  
 \*\* Commissioner Meares seconded  
 \*\* For: None  
 \*\* Against: Commissioners Lawlor, Meares, Ribeiro and Walker

The motion failed,

■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that this meant Mr. Capozzi would move forward in the process.

2. Interim Chief Dominguez is requesting approval by the Board of Police Commissioners

to send out 1 conditional offer of employment from Eligibility #21-13 to the position of Police Officer (Lateral):

1. #5 - Stephanie James

- Chief Dominguez indicated that they were requesting that the Board of Police Commissioners to approve one conditional offer of employment from Eligibility List #12-13 to position of police officer for Stephanie James
- Commissioner Ribeiro asked if it was conditional offer or to hire.
- Chief Dominguez indicated it was from conditional to hire.
- Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that the request as written needed to be amended.

\*\* Commissioner Walker Motioned to Amend the Agenda to Reflect the Change of Conditional Offer to Hire Stephanie James as a Police Officer  
\*\* Commissioner Lawlor seconded  
\*\* Motion passed unanimously

- Chief Dominguez requested that this matter be tabled in light of the previous two votes.

\*\* Commissioner Walker Motioned to Table this Item  
\*\* Commissioner Meares seconded  
\*\* Motion passed unanimously

3. Discussion and action on the recommendation to remove the following candidates from Eligibility List #21-01:

1. #1 - Tyler Evans
2. #4 - Andrea Moore
3. #6 - Samantha Otero
4. #16 - Daniele Allwood
5. #18 - Christopher McElroen

- Chief Dominquez requested that all the candidates except for one be removed as Mr. McElroen had withdrawn from the process prior to this meeting.
- Commissioner Ribeiro asked if there was a signed, written withdrawal
- Sergeant Smith indicated that Mr. McElroen had not responded to e-mail requests for his participation or requests to review his file. He was given the opportunity to review his file no later than July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and to attend this meeting. Mr. McElroen has not responded to any communications at all. He did not sign a written withdrawal.
- Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that since he did not sign a written withdrawal, the Board would vote. After explaining what open and closed sessions means, she went on to ask each candidate in attendance what they would like. They all opted to be heard during closed session.

\*\* **Commissioner Walker moved to Enter Executive Session to Review the Chief's Recommendation for removal of these Candidates**  
\*\* **Commissioner Meares seconded**

**\*\* Motion passed unanimously**

**The Board entered Executive Session at 7:25 p.m.**

**\*\* Commissioner Walker moved to Exit Executive Session**

**\*\* Commissioner Lawlor seconded**

**\*\* Motion passed unanimously**

**The Board exited Executive Session at 8:37 p.m.**

**\*\* Commissioner Walker Motioned to Adhere to the Chief's Request to Remove Candidate Tyler Evans from the Eligibility List #21-01**

**\*\* Commissioner Lawlor seconded**

**\*\* For: None**

**\*\* Against: Commissioners Lawlor, Meares, Ribeiro and Walker**

The motion failed.

**■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that the Board's recommendation was that the Candidate Tyler Evans be retested before moving any further in the process.**

**\*\* Commissioner Walker Motioned to Adhere to the Chief's Request to Remove Candidate Andrea Moore from the Eligibility List #21-01**

**\*\* Commissioner Lawlor seconded**

**\*\* For: None**

**\*\* Against: Commissioners Lawlor, Meares, Ribeiro and Walker**

The motion failed.

**■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated it was the Board's recommendation that Candidate Andrea Moore move forward in the process and be retested before any further consideration.**

**\*\* Commissioner Walker Motioned to Adhere to the Chief's Request to Remove Candidate Samantha Otero from the Eligibility List #21-01**

**\*\* Commissioner Lawlor seconded**

**\*\* For: None**

**\*\* Against: Commissioners Lawlor, Meares, Ribeiro and Walker**

The motion failed.

**■ Commissioner Ribeiro indicated that it was the Board's recommendation that Candidate Samantha Otero go for further testing before any further consideration.**

**\*\* Commissioner Walker Motioned to Adhere to the Chief's Request to Remove Candidate Danielle Allwood from the Eligibility List #21-01**

**\*\* Commissioner Lawlor seconded**

\*\* Motion passed unanimously

Motion carried.

\*\* Commissioner Walker Motioned to Consider the Chief's Request to Remove Candidate Christopher McElroen from the Eligibility List #21-01

\*\* Commissioner Lawlor seconded

\*\* Motion passed unanimously

Motion carried.

### **INTERNAL AFFIARS REPORT**

Captain Zannelli

■ Captain Zannelli indicated there were six closed cases for the month. Worthy of note, however, were the two incidents at the end involving an officer. He asked if the Board had any questions regarding the use-of-force investigations that his team conducted in conjunction with the training academy staff.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro asked if there were any questions. There were no questions.

### **RETIREMENTS (For Board information only)**

Officer Clayton Howze - eff., June 30, 2021

Sergeant Milton Jackson - eff., June 30, 2021

Sergeant Robert Koval - eff., June 30, 2021

Lieutenant Mark O'Neill - eff., June 30, 2021

Chief Otoniel Reyes - eff., June 30, 2021

### **RESIGNATION (For Board information only)**

Officer Joshua Lewis - eff., June 27, 2021

Assistant ACO Parris Gibbs, Jr. - eff, July 2, 2021

### **RECRUITMENT/SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT**

■ Commissioner Lawlor indicated that they had not met yet. He would not speak on behalf of Commissioner Walker. They did have a brief conversation at the last training session. It is their intention to meet later that week. A lot of the issues that had come up that evening are relevant to the Committee's deliberations. They are committed to understanding the process as best they can in order to consider recommendations to potentially make changes going forward.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro added that commissioners did go through commissioner training. It was a very informative training. The hope is that the training would better prepare them to deal with the work at hand.

### **EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE REPORT**

■ Commissioner Meares stated there were General Orders that were ready for the



commissioners' review. There are about five of them. The Committee is currently considering them. There's no report in terms of a recommendation for approval.

■ Commissioner Meares went on to note for the public and the staff that she thought it was great that the policies have been updated. She gave everyone the heads up that at least a couple of them need to comport with the new legislation on use of force and in particular the policy regarding pursuit.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

■ Commissioner Ribeiro stated that she did have an opportunity to actually meet with the chief and the Acting Budget Director, Mike Gormany, and Alissa Ebbson, Supervisor, Management Services. They have reviewed the budget and the expenses for the past month. However, they are still closing out the budget. They do anticipate having a balanced budget for the end of the year. Once they are able to meet again and go over it, then she would be able to provide more details to the commissioners.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

There were none.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- \*\* **Commissioner Meares moved to Enter Executive Session to Discuss the Legal Parameters of the Promotional Process with Counsel and Preliminary Drafts and Notes, Internal Affairs and Legal Reports**
- \*\* **Commissioner Walker seconded**
- \*\* **Motion passed unanimously**

■ Commissioner Ribeiro invited the commissioners and Attorney Duprey into the breakout room. She indicated Chief Dominguez would join them after their discussions.

**The Board entered Executive Session at 8:48 p.m.**

- \*\* **Commissioner Walker moved to Exit Executive Session**
- \*\* **Commissioner Meares seconded**
- \*\* **Motion passed unanimously**

**The Board exited Executive Session at 9:25 p.m.**

- \*\* **Commissioner Walker moved to Adjourn the Regular Meeting.**
- \*\* **Commissioner Lawlor seconded.**
- \*\* **Motion passed unanimously**

■ Commissioner Ribeiro thanked everyone given that it was a long evening. She asked Chief Dominguez to pass on to the background investigators that their work is much appreciated. They are appreciated.

The next regular meeting will be on August 10, 2021.  
The Board adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sotonye Otunba-Payne