

**REGULAR SESSION MINUTES  
MAY 11, 2021  
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS  
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT  
VIRTUAL AND TELEPHONIC VIA ZOOM**

**PRESENT:** Commissioners; Michael Lawlor; Isaias Miranda (joined - 6:53 p.m.); Tracey Meares; Evelise Ribeiro; and Donald Walker

Chief Dominguez: Department of Police Service  
Assistant Chief Carl Jacobson: Department of Police Service  
Lieutenant David Zannelli: Department of Police Service  
Sergeant Dana Smith: Department of Police Service  
Ramon Davis: Administrative Assistant II

Florencio Cotto: President of Elm City Local  
Michelle Duprey, Esquire: Deputy Corporation Counsel  
Bruce Fischer: Traffic and Parking  
Doug Hausladen: Traffic and Parking

Gerald Antunes: Board of Alders  
Daniel Hunt  
Ben Lambert: New Haven Register  
Eli Sabin: Board of Alders

**OPEN SESSION**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m., Evelise Ribeiro, Chair, presiding.

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY**

Following the regular meeting of the Traffic Authority, Mr. Fischer and Mr. Hausladen themselves at 6:23 p.m.

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

**DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- \*\* Commissioner Walker moved to Approve the April 13, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes
- \*\* Commissioner Lawlor seconded
- \*\* Motion passed unanimously

**CHIEF'S REPORT**

Chief Renee Dominguez



■ Chief Dominquez stated that on April 24, 2021 the lieutenants' exam was given. By the time the results are released and by the new fiscal year, there would probably be nine vacancies that would immediately be filled. Three captain slots will be filled as well. There were 21 officers who took the test. So, the odds of being promoted off of that list is very high especially before the list expires.

■ The Department is planning on recommendations for promotions to the rank of captain at the next Board meeting. There are currently three vacancies for the rank of captain. The total number of promotions that the Board will see in the beginning of the fiscal year are three captains, nine lieutenants and 11 sergeants. There's going to be a lot of movement in the Department which is always good for morale. It's good for change. It's good to grow and to cultivate the officers on up.

■ There are five officers from the POST Academy in the FTO program. They are in Phase II. They have about six more weeks to complete the program. There is one officer from the New Haven Academy in a remedial phase, who just needs a little bit of extra work, which is not uncommon as they go through the Field Training program. One officer will be done next week. He was delayed because of military leave and he also had COVID during the FTO program.

■ Given that there are 16 new officers in addition to the five that will be getting off the FTO program soon as well as the newly promoted sergeants there are planned meet and greets at their respective Community Management Team Meetings beginning this month. This will take a few months because there are some sergeants who are doing double duty in several districts. The Department wants to ensure all the sergeants make it to their districts. The goal of the meet and greets is to put a face to the supervisors in their communities and the new officers in each district. The Hill will have their officers in attendance tonight.

■ The Academy began the installation of its virtual system on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021. It will probably take a week to complete. The Department is the first police department to have this technology in the tri-state. It is a virtual reality scenario system. The Department will have the ability to do use-of-force type scenarios as well as the ability to do any type of decision-making scenarios through the system. Any commissioners with scenarios they would like to run through the system are welcome. The Department welcomes the commissioners' participation. This is very exciting. There will be interests from other departments wanting to use the system since it is the first of its kind in this region.

■ Project Save Neighborhoods call-in is scheduled for Monday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 200 Orange Street. The goal is to do one of these call-ins every other month and Project Longevity the following month just to continue to engage with individuals who are on parole, probation, group or gun related just to be able to be in front of them to offering services or just the Department giving them a message. Chief Jacobson will be able to answer any questions regarding this.

■ On Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6 p.m., a group of officers from the Department and the city will be attending a quality of life meeting for several wards that encompass District 9. They will discuss some potential solutions to noise, speed, drag racing and a multitude of quality of life issues

■ Finally, there have been 35 non-fatal shootings to date and 9 homicides. This time last year, there were 23 non-fatal shootings and three homicides. In 2019 there were 27 non-fatal shootings and two homicides. In looking at a five-year average at the same time the Department has had an average of 24 shootings and four homicides. The crimes statistics to date are up for this year.

■ From 2016 to 2020 end-of-year reports, on average there were 75 non-fatal shootings and 12 homicides. From 2011 to 2015 end-of-year reports, on average there were 83 non-fatal shootings and 21 homicides.

■ Chief Dominguez stated that Sergeant Smith would give his report regarding recruitment.

■ Commissioner Lawlor gave special shoutout to Lieutenant Rentkowitz and his officers on the Annex and East Shore areas. On social media over the last couple of weeks there have been reports of a noticeable reduction in a number of these noise violations especially in the middle of the night. Last summer it was pretty bad. Everyone in his neighborhood is happy with the work that's being done.

■ Chief Dominguez stated that they were doing different things and the Department is being super responsive. She is glad to get this feedback and would pass it along.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro asked if the quality of life meeting to be held the following day was open to the public. Chief Dominguez stated that it would be a Webinar format and it would be open to the public. It's being put on by a bunch of the alders from the wards that encompass the East Shore and District 9, Quinnipiac. Commissioner Ribeiro asked that invites be sent to the commissioners.

■ Commissioner Meares stated that she had a question regarding something that Chief Dominguez did not discuss this evening. If Chief Dominguez did not have the information, she would appreciate a response at the next meeting. This pertains to vaccination rate of officers. It's incredibly important that as many people in the country, but certainly in New Haven and the State of Connecticut are vaccinated. We need to try to reach herd immunity for all of our safety. Members of the police force are at special risk because they have to engage many different people. In the face of reports nationwide that police officers are less likely to be vaccinated for whatever reasons, the question is inevitable. She is not saying it is true of New Haven. Commissioner Meares said she would appreciate having some information about her sense of the vaccination rates in the Department, to the extent she can share the information. She understands that currently there is no requirement that people are vaccinated.

■ Commissioner Meares further stated that she believes that it is critical that members of the Department set an example and do this. So, whatever information Chief Dominguez could provide about those efforts, her sense of vaccination rates amongst members of the agency, she would be interested in hearing.

■ Chief Dominguez stated all she did during the pandemic was all things COVID. She would say approximately 50 percent of the force is vaccinated. The Department sent out two anonymous surveys that were also sent to other city agencies. The Department did not get a good response. The Department is looking for ways to capture that data. The data was being amassed as officers were being sent for vaccinations. The officers were sent to wherever there was availability. She will say 50 percent are vaccinated because she helped officers set up their accounts to get vaccinated.

■ Chief Dominguez further stated that the part of the hesitation is that the Department has a lot of young women who are worried about fertility and things along that line. The Department is working with the health departments to give out information and to debunk any misinformation or myths at the three line-ups. The Department understand the important of officers being vaccinations as well and will continue efforts to encourage officers to get vaccinated.

■ Commissioner Meares said it was good to have the information. However, there are many shots available. The issue of infertility is a myth. There are plenty of people who could debunk that. She hoped the Department was making efforts to explain that it is a public safety issue.

Her concern is police officers are dealing with people who are strangers to them by definition. They are in pods. The officers are presenting as much risk to people as people are presenting to them. The 50 percent rate of vaccination is good but it is not good enough. We need to make more of an effort to make sure people understand the importance of this. Chief Dominguez agreed.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro noted that the scheduled meet and greets for the new officers and new sergeants is great. Alder Antunes had left the room. This was something that was discussed by the Board. It was also requested by the community particularly the alders that wanted to know the new officers and sergeants. She thanked Chief Dominguez for responding to the request and recommendation. Chief Dominguez said it is great that it is happening.

### **PERSONNEL MATTERS**

There were none.

### **INTERNAL AFFIARS REPORT**

Lieutenant Zannelli

**IA CASE NO. 20C-073:** The complainant alleged that officers were neglective of duty by not taking her family member for residing in the same home with her mother for several years into custody for an active arrest warrant; that the same family member spread COVID-19 to her mother who ultimately passed away was the allegation. The investigation was conducted, but was not limited to the review of body-worn camera footages from multiple officers. The footage revealed that officers responded to the household on multiple dates throughout the past year. That the same family member suffered from intellectual disabilities and has lived in that house for several years establishing a residency. That of the several dates that officers responded to the home, officers did respond on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for a trespassing complaint for the same individual. It is only on this date that the person had an active arrest warrant. However, medical attention was provided to this individual in lieu of being taking him into custody. This was because he was continually coughing up blood on scene. He was recently tested and claimed to be COVID-19 positive. And out of concern for the safety and spreading to other officers and persons being held at the One Union Avenue Detention Facility he was given medical attention instead of being taken into custody on that day. That family members on the same day advised officers that the mother had already just returned home from the hospital after testing positive for COVID-19 and that the results had not been confirmed. Several officers were quarantined as a result of this incident. However, the following day after the person received medical treatment, an operational plan was set in place to take the individual into custody after receiving medical attention. This was in accordance with policy. This complaint was unfounded.

**IA CASE NO. 21C-023:** The complainant alleged that he observed a motor unit officer failing to wear face mask in the area of College and Crown at approximately 12:40 p.m. This complaint was forwarded to Patrol Commander, Lieutenant Mark O'Neill, who spoke with the complainant who was unable to provide further details. CAD confirmed that all motor unit officers were conducting motor vehicle enforcement at different locations at the time the complainant observed the violation. Internal Affairs believes this to be a Yale Campus Police officer. The complainant was provided contact information for the Yale Campus Police

Department's Internal Affairs should the complainant want to follow-up with Yale. It was not confirmed it was an officer in the Department.

**IA CASE NO. 21C-005:** The complainant alleged that he was never notified that his stolen vehicle was recovered and sustained storage fees and damage to his credit as a result. This Internal Affairs investigation revealed that no sworn police officer committed any misconduct or malfeasance during the incident. However, the investigation confirmed that the West Haven Police Department did send our Records Division a COLLECT message alerting that the complainant's vehicle was recovered on July 30, 2020. New Haven Police Department Records Division is staffed by civilian clerks, and not police officers, and is supervised by Commander Dell. As a result of this finding, Commander Dell was tasked with investigating whether any member of her civilian staff was deficient in their clerk duties. Further investigation revealed that the civilian records clerk that was on duty on July 30, 2020 did not notify the complainant upon receiving that locate message from the West Haven Police Department that the vehicle was in fact recovered. The civilian clerk was reprimanded as a result. However, Lieutenant Dell's investigation detailed that she received a copy of the bill for the complainant's vehicle from the garage where it was towed to after being recovered. The bill indicates that the fees were paid by a repossession company on August 6, 2020. This was closed by summary action.

**IA CASE NO. 21C-028:** The complainant alleged the Detective Aurora's was rude and unprofessional to her while investigating an arson at her home by being accusatory of her son regarding the crime. This complaint was assigned to Sergeant Hamel, Detective Aurora's immediate supervisor, for further investigation. Body-worn camera footage did not depict Detective Aurora being rude from the multiple conversations he had with the complainant. Evidence was collected that suggested that the complainant's son may be familiar with or even know the suspects of the arson. Sergeant Hamel spoke with the fire marshal, who was present with Detective Aurora during his conversations with the complainant, who also said that Detective Aurora was not rude during the interactions. Sergeant Hamel followed up with the complainant who also stated she did not wish to proceed further with her complaint after learning of the findings. And this complaint was unfounded.

- The Department has 42 complaints year to date.
- The Board will notice that on the disciplinary section from 2021, the Department has included a large portion of the disciplinary dispositions. The Department has done an incident report matrix on officers who failed to complete all of their incident reports and/or arrest warrants in a timely fashion. The Chief has been rendering disciplines on those.
- Commissioner Ribeiro stated some percentages would be helpful such as the percentage of complaints that are sustained, mediated, etc. She said they could talk about it in more detail later on.

**RETIREMENTS (For Board information only)**

Account Clerk IV, Delores Robinson - eff., February 28, 2021

Sergeant Alberto Merced - eff., May 10, 2021

**RESIGNATION (For Board information only)**

There were none.

- Commissioner Lawlor was logged off. Commissioner Ribeiro stated she would text him.

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

■ Sergeant Dana Smith stated he would give an overview of the Eligibility List #21-01 which is an entry-level list. There were 100 conditional offers sent out of which there were 84 full submissions. There were 12 disqualifications, two declined and two withdrew. On the lateral side, five conditional offers were sent out on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 by Human Resources. Two of the five have submitted both the online PHQ which is Personal History Questionnaire and Background Information packet. One of the two is scheduled to come in on May 12, 2021 to submit her Background Information packet and her PHQ has been submitted. Each candidate must complete and submit the PHQ and submit Background Information packet no later than the deadline of May 19, 2021.

■ Recruitment efforts are still ongoing with daily social media posts in addition to questions and answers with various people with questions regarding the hiring process. There is a Zoom meeting scheduled this week with the president of Police App to discuss their new web-based platform and showing the applicants on how they qualify.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro spoke about the background matrix. She wanted an update on the background matrix.

■ Lieutenant Zannelli responded by saying that they had received some feedback from Corporation Counsel. They were in the process of incorporating the recommendations and representing it to the Chief for her review.

■ Commissioner Ribeiro asked if this would go back to the committee for its review. Lieutenant Zannelli replied that it would.

### **EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE REPORT**

■ Commissioner Ribeiro stated the hope is that the committee would meet soon because part of the committee's responsibilities is reviewing General Orders. There are 11 General Orders pending review. They are with Labor Relations and Corporation Counsel now. So, at some point the committee would convene with the staff to go over these General Orders with recommendations before it goes to the full Board.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

■ Commissioner Ribeiro stated that she had an opportunity to speak with Chief Dominguez as well as Ms. Alissa Ebbson. Ms. Ebbson will now send reports to the Finance Committee. The committee did start receiving Overtime Analysis Reports. The committee will be looking at the budget actual. The committee will be able to present the Board with a detailed analysis of the budget in the future.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were none.

- Given that there was no quorum to go into executive session the matters for Internal Affairs would be heard next month in executive session.
- Commissioner Ribeiro stated that Commissioner Miranda had joined the meeting and so there was a quorum. Commissioner Lawlor did rejoin the meeting.

- \*\* Commissioner Meares moved to Adjourn the Regular Meeting
- \*\* Commissioner Walker seconded.
- \*\* Unanimously passed

The next regular meeting will be on June 8, 2021.  
The Board adjourned at 6.54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sotonye Otunba-Payne