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Andrew Sachs  
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Neil Chaudhary  
Joan Plouffe

## TOWN OF NEWTOWN

### BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Police Commissioners  
Regular Meeting, Tuesday, June 2, 2020

This meeting was held remotely due to COVID-19 mandates and precautions

### MINUTES ARE NOT FINALIZED UNTIL APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

**Present:** Joel Faxon, Scott Cicciari, Neil Chaudhary, Joan Plouffe, Andy Sachs

**Also Present:** Chief Viadero, Captain Vanghele, Officer Lenny Penna and one member of the press.

Chairman Faxon called the meeting to order at 6:32p.m. and noted that although this is a challenging time he hopes the board can meet in person in July, at appropriate distance, while allowing the public to call in.

**Public Participation:** none.

**Police Union Participation:** Officer Lenny Penna stated the union contract is being finalized. Negotiations with the Town went smoothly. He also thanked the department for providing equipment necessary to keep officers clean and safe. Interacting with the public, in a different fashion, is working out well, with limited contact.

**Consideration and action on the minutes of March 3, 2020:** Commissioner Plouffe moved to accept the minutes of March 3, 2020. Commissioner Cicciari seconded. All in favor.

**Chief's Report:** Chief Viadero stated, as a law enforcement professional of 35 years, and speaking for every member of the department, all are disgusted by the video released last week. They are heartbroken and ashamed of what happened, particularly ashamed of the individuals that stood by and did nothing while George Floyd was murdered on the street. As a leader, that type of behavior will never be tolerated, as all have taken an oath to protect. Chief Viadero says there was a complete breakdown and the lack of trust is understood. Law enforcement now has to rebuild and earn that trust. Questioning the accepted culture there, Chief assured the board that is not the accepted culture here. Newtown has good officers who are well selected and well trained who work hand in hand with the community. Operations in the Town have been improved over the past few years as far as training and transparency. Body cams have been put into place for accountability; the complaint process is very transparent. Fairfield County Chiefs think it's very important to continue bias training. The outrage and need for accountability is understandable. Their voice is heard, the department stands with them in wanting to work to solve this and work together. Chief Viadero reiterated that behavior will never be tolerated here. There was a zoom conference with 95 Chiefs from CT; there will be a remote forum hosted by CCSU to address questions from the public. Chairman Faxon spoke about policy and procedures relative to officer's conduct. He asked about the appropriateness, based on training at POST and subsequent Newtown Police Department training, of the technique used by the officer on Mr. Floyd that ultimately resulted in his death. Chief Viadero said this is not a practice that is taught in CT or in Newtown. It is not approved, not trained and is prohibited. De-escalation techniques, use of less lethal techniques are reviewed with officers. In his 35

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Town Clerk of Newtown 12:05pm  
Debbie Aurelia Halstead

year career Chief Viadero has never been taught that technique and it has not been approved anywhere. Chairman Faxon has seen cases develop from people not adhering to policies and procedures or responding appropriately and appreciates the Newtown policy and training prohibit this kind of activity. Chief Viadero said the culture is disturbing; that culture doesn't exist in Newtown.

Joe Joudy retired this week with a small, rear parking lot ceremony. Once allowed there will be a larger celebration for Det. Joudy. In the near future the vacancy at the department will be filled. Chief Viadero will contact the testing agency; the dynamics of testing may change. There will be a patrolman position to be filled also. Chief Viadero will have more information at the next meeting. Chairman Faxon commended Detective Joe Joudy for 35 years of service; that is a spectacular amount of time for one to commit to the Town. He did a great job under several administrations and varying circumstances. He is very happy for him and wishes him the best.

Officers were called in during the search for Peter Manfredonia to provide security for the town. There was a police presence at the funeral for homicide victim Nicholas Eisele. Monthly activity is down, motor vehicle activity is low. Things are slowly returning to normal.

Commissioner Cicciari appreciates Chief Viadero's views and efforts.

#### **Old Business:**

**a.) Police Building Update:** Building progress continues ahead of schedule. There will be a tour on June 4 with Public Building & Site. Consigli and KBA have taken all precautions necessary with the pandemic and nobody has gotten sick.

**b.) COVID-19 Update:** Relative to COVID-19 the department had to change staffing and the way in which officers respond to service. Officers adapted well and have been cooperative. The community understands the building being closed. There has been reduced face to face interaction, but not a lack of service. There have been calls relative to social distancing. There have been no confirmed COVID-19 cases in the department.

**c.) Reserve Officer Policy:** Reserve officers are a regular practice in other departments. Newtown has had a lot of extra duty traffic work and more expected with the Exit 11 construction. Our officers are used but other jurisdictions come in per a mutual agreement. Our retired officers can be used for extra duty; having a Newtown trained officer is a benefit. Additionally, revenue generated would stay with Newtown. There is nothing detrimental to the union, the only time a reserve officer would be used is when all other means have been exhausted to get a full time officer to do the job. The policy is straightforward and primarily for construction extra duty. The reserve officer is not eligible for unemployment. The Town always tries to have Newtown officers present at special events. The reserve officers would be covered under the Town liability policy. Commissioner Plouffe moved to accept the Newtown Police, Policy and Procedure relative to Reserve Officers. Commissioner Sachs seconded. All in favor.

**Commissioners Participation:** Chairman Faxon suggested holding a special July 7 board meeting with commissioners, at a large enough venue to distance, and invite public to call in. A proposed ordinance may be on that agenda.

Chief Viadero thanked Capt. Vanghele for a job well done in the first days of the pandemic while Chief was away.

Commission Cicciari welcomed Commissioner Chaudhary back after his COVID-19 illness. He also applauded the men and women of the Newtown Police, adapting during these unprecedented times. Chief Viadero said it is a cooperative effort with Officer Penna and the union. Commissioner Chaudhary thanked the Chief for press release and Facebook post while he was in the hospital.

**Public Participation:** none.

**Adjournment:** Having no further business to report the police commissioners adjourned their regular meeting at 7:08p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Susan Marcinek, Clerk*

