



TOWN OF NEWTOWN

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Police Commissioners
Regular Meeting, Tuesday, April 6, 2021
191 South Main Street, Newtown
Conference Room

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

Present: Joel Faxon, Scott Cicciari, Neil Chaudhary (via phone), Joan Plouffe

Absent: Andy Sachs

Also Present: Chief Viadero, Capt. Vanghele (via phone) and one member of the press.

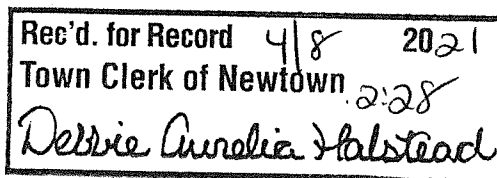
Chairman Faxon called the meeting to order at 6:35p.m.

Public Participation: none.

Police Union Participation: Officer James reported a Detective test is coming up. There is an upcoming retirement. They are keeping an eye on the current police trial. The gym at the PD is open, signed waivers are required; more equipment will come soon. Commissioner Faxon appreciates the communication and stated the commission is always open to hear from the officers.

Consideration and action on the minutes: Commissioner Plouffe moved to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of March 2, 2021. Commissioner Cicciari seconded. All in favor. Commissioner Plouffe moved to accept the minutes of the special meeting of April 1, 2021. Commissioner Cicciari seconded. The motion passed with Commissioner Chaudhary abstaining.

Chief's Report: There was a notable arrest in Sandusky, Ohio. Officer Monkton, an SRO at the High School conducted a complex investigation and obtained search warrants. Officers Monkton and Chapman traveled to escort the person charged with serious sex crimes to Newtown. Officer Chapman participated in a Suicide Prevention forum. He is a mentor to school age children and did a phenomenal job. Vendors have presented new, less than lethal, technology. Compliant Technologies demonstrated gloves that are electrified. The shock is less than a taser but allows for control of a non-compliant suspect. The bola wrap deploys a thin rope, laser guided, to wrap legs or arms. Both would be used to de-escalate and are inexpensive. The new PD is 100% operational, including the booking area and communications. Chief Viadero commended Lt. Kullgren, Sgt. Silver, Officer Siecienski and Officer James for the work that went into vetting the policy and changing accordingly for the new facility. The department, officer and civilian staff, is 90% COVID compliant. Capt. Vanghele and Lt. Robinson have done a great job monitoring and managing the staff during the pandemic. The Detective test will be early June. Four individuals have come forward to express interest and have been rotated on a provisional basis to get acclimated. There is another anticipated retirement in August, leaving two vacancies. The POST Council has been meeting two to three times a month relative to policies and the Police Accountability bill. Twenty officers and Chiefs from across that state have been working on a Use of Force lesson plan together. All officers will need to be trained; recruit training will be done at the academy. A complete, consistent use of force plan is crucial.



The goal is to have the policy done by summer and commence training. Implementation is January 2022. Chief Viadero will be speaking at a Parent Connection event on issues affecting individuals with substance abuse. Chief Viadero is working in cooperation with area chiefs from Danbury, Bethel, Ridgefield, Brookfield and New Milford, getting together at least once a month to discuss issues in each town. Danbury Police Chief Pat Ridenhour has invited Newtown to attend Greater Danbury area events. Danbury Works Neighborhood Night is an event the chiefs will attend on April 22, speaking on immigrant issues, communities of color, looking at inclusion and opening lines of communication between law enforcement and these communities. Traffic enforcement continues. The speed trailer is back up on Toddy Hill Road. Other areas of enforcement are Elm Drive, Old Hawleyville, Mt. Pleasant, Hammertown and Hattertown. There have been a lot of calls relative to Taunton Hill Road and increased commercial vehicles. There has been an influx of traffic off I-84, exit 9. If the PD was notified sooner of the length of time I-84 would be shut down due to a truck accident they would have been more prepared to mitigate the gridlock. Sgt. Silver has filed an application with the state for a No Thru Truck sign on Taunton Hill Road. The PD received grant funding and will be doing enhanced enforcement for distracted driving throughout the Town from April 8 – April 12. There was a three car accident on Key Rock Road with serious injuries. There are speed bumps and drivers still speed. The motorcyclist that hit a guard rail on Glen Road is recovering. The state has not granted CVS approval to have a drug take back box. Sgt. Wisentaner is taking necessary steps to have a box in the lobby of the PD. It is a worthwhile service. There is a DEA sponsored drug takeback on April 24. Newtown is using the firing range in Monroe. WestCOG is conducting a feasibility study on a regional range. Lt. Kullgren is involved in researching cost and location. Bridgeport purchased equipment and mechanics but did not find a location. Lt. Kullgren is looking into construction through WestCOG with equipment from Bridgeport. It's an ongoing process. All information will be brought back to WestCOG. Chief Viadero commends Lt. Kullgren and training officers. Every class is presented virtually, online. All officers are up to date on certifications. Practical skills are in person.

Old Business: none.

Correspondence: none.

New Business:

Personnel update: One new hire is in POST Academy and out of the zoom session. Hugo Rojas has received approval from the POST Council and will be sworn in this week; there is scheduled training at POST to get him the proper certification. The latest hire is in the vetting process and expected at the Milford Academy on 4/15.

Commissioner Participation: Commissioner Chaudhary asked about the flagpole. Chief Viadero said there is not a passing lane at the flagpole, therefore it is not legal to pass on the right when there is a car making a left turn at the flagpole and enforcement will be taken. A private resident brought a study to WestCOG; there is no funding. Region 5, DOT recognizes there is a need for improvements; a study has already been done. The next step would be to involve legislators. There is a need due to increased traffic through Town. Commissioner Chaudhary asked about car accidents in border states due to legalized marijuana. He asked about DRE (Drug Recognition Expert). Chief Viadero said Sgt. Wood and Officer Wickman are DRE trained. It's extensive classroom training as well as practicals, taking place within the state and outside the state. Additional funding will be needed to train more officers as there is a cost to backfilling staff for overtime when officers are away from the job in order to train. Fairfield County departments pull resources; a number of towns have DRE's. Chief Viadero believes the number of Newtown DRE's will need to increase if the bill gets passed. After discussion about the lack of striping on Town roads it was noted that Fred Hurley will be invited to the next meeting. Chief Viadero said stop bars

at intersections are also needed. Chairman Faxon expressed disappointment that the Commission voted on this topic and striping hasn't been done. This is a safety issue and striping has to be done.

Public Participation: none.

Adjournment: Having no further business to report Commissioner Plouffe moved to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners at 7:20 p.m. Commissioner Cicciari seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Marcinek, Clerk

