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Joel Faxon
Andrew Sachs
Scott Cicciari
Neil Chaudhary
Joan Plouffe

TOWN OF NEWTOWN

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Police Commissioners
Regular Meeting, Wednesday, October 5, 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, Joan Plouffe

Absent: Andy Sachs

Also Present: Chief Viadero, Capt. Vanghele, Lt. Kullgren, Officer McCarthy, Dr. James McCabe (via zoom), five members of the public and one member of the press.

Chairman Faxon called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Public Participation:

Alexa Larson, withheld address due to her job. She's conducting a five town tour of police commissions. She voiced concern on computer crimes and plans to fill out a report on cover ups, misconduct, violations and vandalism at the park.

Greg Pategas, 126 Toddy Hill Rd., last attended a meeting in June and inquired to his request for white line etching on side of the road by the flagpole. Chief Viadero said that someone from the state came out and he is in the process of following up with him. Chief Viadero will have an update at the next meeting.

Pete Sepi, 83 Toddy Hill Rd., is proud of the police department, understands the speed trailer was vandalized, and is happy it's up and running.

Carolyn Sept, 83 Toddy Hill Rd., asked for clarification on stop signs saying some side roads, such as Sherman, Still Hill and Old Mill have them, while others do not. Chairman Faxon said there should be stop signs on roads that meet another road and are meant to stop. She stated speed continues to be an issue.

Police Union Participation: none.

Consideration and action on the minutes: Commissioner Plouffe moved to accept the minutes of the special meeting of September 8, 2021. Commissioner Cicciari seconded. All in favor.

Chief's Report: The Gun Buy Back is the morning of Oct. 16. Twenty five police departments in CT are participating. Newtown has \$10,000 from the Newtown Action Alliance for this program. The awards ceremony is Oct. 21st. The Newtown Police Department 50th Anniversary celebration is November 13. Training: Annual firearms qualifications, new use of force training in December. December 3 and December 20 Dr. Lorenzo Boyd will hold implicit bias training. There was a fatal motor vehicle accident last Tuesday, on Huntingtown Road. Toddy Hill Road enforcement continues. A Monroe contractor has been warned, and is receptive to no longer using Toddy Hill as a cut through. Trucks with legitimate business purposes in the area are permitted to use Toddy Hill Road. Exit 11 construction will begin on October 18. Minimal disruption is expected as at this point it is only utility work. The entire project is expected to take two plus years. Rizzo Construction is the contractor.

Rec'd. for Record 10.7 2021
Town Clerk of Newtown 11:00am
Debbie Aurelia Halstead

Chairman Faxon stated he was proud of the police department and the 50th anniversary. He attended the Police Commission Annual Meeting in Stratford where Lt. Robinson and Sgt. Ruszczyk were recognized for their affiliation with HEART 9/11 in New York City. This is a testament to our officers helping other officers in the area of mental health throughout the country. Chairman Faxon thanked former Commissioner Paul Mangiafico for also attending, as well as Commissioner Cicciari and Chief Viadero.

Chief Viadero wished Candide Slinko a happy birthday.

Old Business:

Personnel Update: Pete Wlasuk will complete FTO soon. Frank Piazza will graduate the academy in November. Amanda Lopez is enrolled in Waterbury. Barry Hyvarien background has been vetted and is awaiting certification. His swearing in will soon be scheduled.

New Business:

Presentation by Dr. McCabe (Body Worn Camera Audit): Dr. McCabe presented the (attached) Newtown Police Body-worn Camera Assessment Project. Dr. McCabe reported Newtown deployed body worn cameras in 2018 and are as essential as the police officers car, radio and weapon. Studies show that the outcome of police/community interaction is less important to the person than the way they were treated. Two student researchers accessed Newtown's body worn cameras, spending a couple of weeks looking at a number of videos and scoring them. Once there was confidence they were seeing videos the same way they began on their own. Dr. McCabe explained the scoring, which ranged from -5 for extremely poor, 0 for neutral and 5 for very positive. The students used the systematic social observation technique. The results were overwhelming positive. Use of force was described as hand strike, weapon or Taser; there were only two open hand techniques noted. When debriefing the students they stood by their scores; the officers did a good job dealing with people they encountered. Dr. McCabe has confidence in the report and would like to repeat it in the future to compare the two studies. Commissioner Chaudhary stated most stops do not require de-escalation and the huge number of 5 scores make it look like the officers were deactivating a hot scenario; he is curious how that was coded. Was it an extreme lack of escalation that led to the 5's?

Dr. McCabe said that it was one of the flaws of the methodology. If there was no apparent escalation it should've been marked as a zero. A five would indicate an officer doing an excellent job of de-escalating a situation. Dr. McCabe said it was a training issue on their end, assuming the research team may have looked at a scale of 1 to 10 and not a zero with a -5 and a 5. However, during debrief the research team stated they were grading per the schedule as directed. This raises Dr. McCabes confidence having both students looking at the videos and scoring the same way. Dr. McCabe suggested the scale needs to be rethought. That being said, whether the scoring is a zero center with a -5 and a 5 on either end or if miscoded as a 1 to 10, the department is still coming up on the very, very high positive end of the scale. Commissioner Cicciari thanked Dr. McCabe for the efforts that went into the study and appreciates the partnership with the Newtown PD. It's an important exercise and agrees that this evaluation should be conducted on an ongoing basis. Commissioner Cicciari asked if in future studies there will be an 'in summary' that the commissioner can set action to. Dr. McCabe said that this process needs to be embraced to evaluate officer conduct. Additionally, there is enough evidence in the body camera system for the department to promote itself and the good work that is being done. There is opportunity to do more with this powerful tool; a good way to do remote supervision and a good way to promote all the good the men and woman in the police department are doing. Commissioner Plouffe questioned the 65 unknown gender. Dr. McCabe confirmed the 65 were scored; not discarded. Chairman Faxon asked if Dr. McCabe can view a subset of the 500 videos to confirm the validity of the scores. Dr. McCabe asked if it is worthwhile to go back to reassess the scoring or is it better to go forward and further develop the coding; or both. Chairman Faxon suggested an amalgamation of the two. Dr. McCabe said he is not aware of any other studies of this type being done

across the country. Chairman Faxon suggested it would be helpful to other law enforcement agencies, once this is fully fine-tuned, if Dr. McCabe publish this as a methodology departments can use to objectively evaluate the conduct of officers and the satisfaction of the community.

Commissioner Participation: Commissioner Plouffe noted that Taunton Hill was double striped; it was a messy job and one stripe was painted over, making it now a single stripe. Chief Viadero will follow up with Fred Hurley. They are making progress on getting the roads striped. Commission Cicciari asked about a drug drop box. Chief Viadero said they are waiting on approvals and a new box; the Newtown PD will continue to participate in the drug take back days. CVS is also waiting on approval and would be the ideal place for drug drop off. Commissioner Chaudhary thanked Chief Viadero for having the body camera study done saying it's the right thing to do. He was impressed with the methodology. Chief Viadero stated the department is fortunate to have a relationship with Sacred Heart University and Dr. McCabe. The department policy is predicated on the state policy that says supervisors audit body worn cameras. Commissioner Plouffe is impressed with the study and commended the leadership and the officers. Chairman Faxon stated this is a huge tool; the methodology will be fine-tuned. If this can be deployed in agencies throughout the country it can go a long way in bolstering public support and belief that day to day interaction between police and community can be verified and is overwhelming positive. It will support the idea that police officers are very necessary and their activities are positive to the communities they serve. Commissioner Cicciari reminded everybody to vote in the November 2nd election.

Executive Session: Commissioner Cicciari moved to enter Executive Session per CT General State Statute 1-200(6a) to discuss personnel matters and invited Chief Viadero and Capt. Vanghele to attend. Executive Session was entered into at 7:35pm and returned to regular session at 7:40p.m. with no motion taken.

Adjournment: Having no further business the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Att: Dr. McCabe body worn camera presentation

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Marcinek, Clerk

BWC ENCOUNTER – DATA ENTRY FORM

Rank: _____ Name: _____ BWC FILE# _____

Type of Encounter _____

Was notice given within a reasonable practical time that the encounter was being recorded? (Y/N)

Was the BWC activated properly (1=Yes, 2=Started Late, 3=Ended Early, 4=Started Late and Ended Early)?

Where was the person first encountered (street, vehicle, lobby, etc.)?

What time did the encounter begin?

How long was the encounter?

What was the person's gender?

What was the person's race/ethnicity?

What was the person's approximate age?

Was any force used during the encounter?

(Y/N)

If force was used, what kind?

Voice and Language	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Transparency	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Impartiality	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Escalation	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Satisfaction	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

COMMENTS _____

	Negative (-)	Neutral (0)	Positive (+)
Voice and Language	Informal (My-Man, Hey you, Bro, etc.), Profanity used		Formal (Sir, Ma'am, Mr., Ms., etc.), Explanation provided Concern for well-being
	One-way, short, directive, Officer doesn't allow suspect voice, MOS doesn't listen		Two-way; Conversation-like, Officer listens
	Aggressive, Hostile, Argumentative		Friendly, Pleasant, Cordial
Transparency	No explanation was given and the person was not told given enough information to understand what was happening or to resolve their issue.		The officer took active steps to describe what actions were being taken and how the person needed to do to resolve their issues.
	The officer seemed uninformed and/or how to handle the situation		The officer appeared very knowledgeable of the law and procedures to deal with the situation
Escalation	It appeared that the officer was escalated the situation when not warranted situation		The officer deescalated the situation.
Impartiality	It appeared that the officer was disrespectful to the person		It appeared that the officer was respectful to the person
	The officer favored one party over the other during the encounter		The officer exercised fairness in the encounter and remained neutral between any parties during the encounter
Satisfied	The person encountered appeared dissatisfied with the officer		The person encountered appeared very satisfied with the encounter

NEWTOWN POLICE BODY-WORN CAMERA ASSESSMENT PROJECT



**James E. McCabe, Ph.D.
Sacred Heart University**

POLICE BODY-WORN CAMERAS

- First Generation – UK in 2005
- Ordered by Judge Scheindlin – *NYPD Stop and Frisk* in 2013
- Use in the U.S. increases after 2014
 - In 2013 only 21 % of large police departments reported BWCs
 - In 2018 more than 81 % of large departments had cameras
- Recommended by President's Task Force in 21st Century Policing
- Deployed in Newtown in 2019



POLICE BWC IMPACTS

- Police Accountability
- Video Evidence of Officer Conduct
- Improved community trust
- Reduction in civilian complaints
- Differing views on use of force (maybe policy related)



LEVERAGING THE DATA

- Impacts rely on Secondary Data
- Potential for Remote Supervision
 - Tactics
 - Communication skills
 - Use of Force
- Evaluate the quality of police-community interactions
 - Lawfulness
 - Quality of the Interaction
 - Procedural Justice



INTERACTION QUALITY

- Did the officer use force?
 - Did that use of force seem appropriate?
- Did the officer escalated the encounter?
- Did the community member appear satisfied with the encounter?



PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

Definition

- Procedural justice refers to the idea of fairness in the processes that resolve disputes and allocate resources
- It is a concept that, when embraced, promotes positive organizational change and fosters better relationships.

Four Pillars

FAIRNESS

VOICE

TRANSPARENCY

IMPARTIALITY



THE STUDY

- March and April 2020
- Student Researchers from Sacred Heart
- 500 Randomly Selected BWC videos
 - 100 selected weekly
 - Populations ~ 3,800 videos
- Systematic Social Observation of Encounters



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What time did the encounter begin? _____

How long was the encounter? _____

What was the person's gender? _____

What was the person's race/ethnicity? _____

What was the person's approximate age? _____

Was any force used during the encounter? _____

If force was used, what kind? _____

(Y/N)

Voice and Language	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Transparency	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
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RESULTS - DEMOGRAPHICS

Race	#
Asian	4
Black	34
Hispanic	41
White	331
Other	4
Unknown	86
Grand Total	500

Gender	#
Female	211
Male	224
UNKONWN	65
Grand Total	500

Age	#
16-20	22
20-30	101
30-40	84
40-50	96
50-60	55
Over 60	48
UNKNOWN	94
Grand Total	500



RESULTS — ENCOUNTER TYPE

Type	#
Alarm	14
Arrest	30
Dispute	23
General CFS	164
Miscellaneous	63
MVA	80
Report Crime	36
Suspicious Activity	7
Traffic Stop	83
Grand Total	500



RESULTS - LOCATION

Location	#
Commercial/Building	327
Police Department	60
Residence	160
Street	235
Unclear	7
Grand Total	500



RESULTS — USE OF FORCE

Force Used?	#
No	496
Yes	4
Grand Total	500

All 4 observed uses of force involved open hand techniques. Two of these incidents involved Male/White subjects and the other two involved Female/White subjects. In all of these incidents the civilian encountered was hostile towards the police officer and the situation escalated to the point that the officer needed to uses open hand compliance techniques to manage the situation.



RESULTS - ESCALATION

Escalation Rating	Count	% Rating
-3	1	0.2
-2	1	0.2
0	34	7.8
2	1	0.2
3	6	1.4
4	5	1.2
5	387	89.0
Grand Total	435	100.0

65 Videos were removed from this analysis because the characteristics of the person were unknown. The ambiguity of the event made it impossible to assess the level of escalation and procedural justice variables.



RESULTS – PROCEDURAL JUSTICE VOICE

Voice Rating	Count	% Rating
0	20	4.6
3	6	1.4
4	14	3.2
5	395	90.8
Grand Total	435	100.0



RESULTS – PROCEDURAL JUSTICE TRANSPARENCY

Transparency Rating	Count	% Rating
0	41	9.4
3	4	0.9
4	10	2.3
5	380	87.4
Grand Total	435	100.0



RESULTS – PROCEDURAL JUSTICE IMPARTIALITY

Impartiality Rating	Count	% Rating
0	27	6.2
3	3	0.7
4	8	1.8
5	397	91.3
Grand Total	435	100.0



RESULTS – OVERALL SATISFACTION

Satisfaction Score	Count	% Rating
-5	2	0.5
-3	2	0.5
-2	1	0.2
0	63	14.4
2	1	0.2
3	12	2.8
4	11	2.5
5	343	78.9
Grand Total	435	100.0



RESULTS - SATISFACTION

- Both -5 scores involved the same encounter. The BWC videos were taken at two separate times and recorded a DWI arrest of a M/W/20-30. The defendant was belligerent, disrespectful, and hostile towards the officer.
- The other three negative satisfaction scores involved traffic stops where the motorists were not pleased about receiving a ticket. These encounters involved a F/B/40-50, a M/H/20-30, and a F/H/30-40.

