

3 MAIN STREET  
NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT 06470  
TEL. (203) 270-4360  
FAX. (203) 270-4247



Joel Faxon  
Andrew Sachs  
Scott Cicciari  
Neil Chaudhary  
Joan Plouffe

## TOWN OF NEWTOWN

### BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Police Commissioners  
Regular Meeting, Tuesday, January 5, 2021

This meeting was held remotely due to COVID-19 mandates and precautions and lack of appropriate space due to Election Day

#### 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, Capt. and one member of the press

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

**Public Participation:** none.

**Police Union Participation:** Officer Adam James was present to say that everyone is happy with the new building and thanked the Police Commission for their role in that. The focus is to outfit the gym with a goal of officer wellness; piece by piece it is coming together. He said the summer was tough but morale is up. Chairman Faxon thanked Officer James for attending the meeting saying he appreciates receiving direct feedback. He encouraged Officer James to continue attending the meetings saying the Police Commission wants to hear from everybody. Commissioner Cicciari voiced sincere appreciation to the men and women who continue to serve this town in police fashion. Officer James said that Newtown wide the officials have been great to the department.

**Consideration and action on the minutes:** Commissioner Cicciari moved to accept the minutes of December 1, 2020. Commissioner Chaudhary seconded. All in favor. Commissioner Plouffe moved to accept the minutes of December 9, 2020. Commissioner Chaudhary seconded, Commissioner Cicciari abstained as he was not present. All in favor. Commissioner Plouffe moved to accept the minutes of December 22, 2020. Commissioner Cicciari seconded. All in favor.

**Chief's Report:** Officer Scott Smith has been coordinating the COVID-19 vaccine initiative. The front line patrol officers received shots first, followed by administrative staff. Second shots will be received next week and the remaining staff the following week. Currently there are two officers out on 7-10 day quarantine due to exposure to family members who tested positive. Chief Viadero stated the shots are not mandatory and estimated 75% of staff have received shots. Some have opted out of the first round. Everybody has the opportunity to get the shot. Current CDC guidelines will be followed. If there is a direct exposure staff will continue to be quarantined, even if they have received a shot, until another directive is given by the CDC. The Police budget has been given to the Finance Director. There is nothing out of the ordinary. The only significant increases are due to the police accountability bill, including mental health check and drug tests. Other increases are contractual. Chief Viadero has researched the Charter as far as the duties, responsibilities and authority of the Police Commission and CT General State Statute 7-276 and finds Newtown to be in compliance with what the Police Accountability Bill has required of towns. POST will finalize policy updates and revisions. The Use of Force Policy will go into effect April 1, 2021. Chief Viadero will be re-appointed to the POST Council. This allows for input into issues that deal with our police officers. Officers have been involved in a SMART (Stress Management and Resiliency Training) program, which was founded in Boston out of the Benson-Henry Institute. This was originally for trauma room nurses, physicians and physicians assistants. Newtown was able to get a formalized program tailored to law enforcement. Approximately 800 officers in service training have been trained over the past two years at the Bridgeport and New Haven and Milford academies. There will be a virtual Q&A presentation, hosted by Heart 911, from the 9/11 museum. Sgt. Ruszczyk, Chief

Rec'd. for Record 1-12-20 21  
Town Clerk of Newtown 1:00pm  
Debbie Aurelie Halstead

Garcia (Bridgeport PD), Bill Keegan and a Benson-Henry individual will be on the zoom presentation. Chief Viadero said this is gaining traction and attention; there is hope for support and funding from the U.S. Attorney's Office. He is very proud of the officers, they did a great job and bring credibility to the program. Capt. Vanghele said Heart 911 is a great program and he is proud of officers for being involved. Mental health in law enforcement is the direction we should be going in.

Commissioner Chaudhary asked if an ordinance is needed to state the Police Commission is the Civilian Review Board. Commissioner Plouffe asked if it should be noted in the Charter also. Chief Viadero said based on the Police Accountability Bill the Police Commission is doing everything required; the powers are extended. Subpoena powers are granted under the General State Statute. The bill and directives were aimed at departments and towns with no civilian review of the police agency. By virtue of the Charter, Newtown has that. Upon further discussion it was decided the commission would add this item to the agenda of the next meeting for discussion and action on a subsection that the Police Commission shall act as the Civilian Review Board. The Legislative Council is creating a Charter Revision Commission; a body of Legislative Council also acts as the Ordinance Committee. Ordinance language was also discussed. A proposed ordinance change was discussed relative to section 17 suggesting the addition of "the Board of Police Commissioners shall act as the Civilian Police Review Board for the Town of Newtown"

**Old Business:**

**a.) Police Building Update:** The department has been in the building for six weeks. The punch list consists of six items. The lobby and records division is completely operational. The consultants will begin to build out the communications units the end of January, beginning of February. The holding facility at 3 Main Street is still being used.

**Correspondence:** none.

**New Business:**

**a.) Police Candidate Update:** Peter Wlasuk has been hired and will be sworn in on January 6 at 3:00pm. After a four hour orientation on Thursday he will begin a virtual academy beginning on Friday, Jan. 8. Hugo Rojas was hired on December 9. His name will be on a POSTC agenda in February for certification and then will be sworn in. The last position posting will be on the website and police.com. Chief Viadero hopes to bring candidates forward in March.

**Commissioner Participation:** Commissioner Plouffe asked about the drop box for expired medications. Chief Viadero said CVS may have a drop box; if that the case the PD will not have one. Commissioner Chaudhary asked the status of the Hattertown Historic District traffic issues. Chief Viadero said the traffic unit is completing a report on a traffic study and he will have an update at the next meeting. There will be no road striping until the spring. Commissioner Cicciari said it's a good idea to have Fred Hurley periodically attend a meeting to update the Commission.

**Public Participation:** none.

**Adjournment:** Having no further business to report Commissioner Chaudhary moved to adjourn the regular meeting of the police commissioners at 7:06p.m. Commissioner Sachs seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Susan Marcinek, Clerk*