

**MINUTES
BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2012
CITY HALL AUDITORIUM**

Immediately Following the Board of Trustees of the Police and Firemen's Pension Fund starting at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Ryan Bingham opened the regular meeting of the Board of Public Safety on Wednesday, March 7, 2012 at 6:35 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium.

Present were: Mayor Ryan Bingham, Commissioner Douglas Benedetto, Commissioner James Potter, Commissioner Christopher Cook, Commissioner Richard Zaharek, Commissioner Darlene Battle, Commissioner Angelo LaMonica, Corporation Counsel Ernestine Yuille-Weaver, Fire Chief John Field, Police Chief Michael Maniago, Mr. Fred Rosa, Traffic Officer Steve Pisarski, Deputy Police Chief Smedick, Deputy Chief Brunoli, Mike Maccalous, Charlie Marciano of the TVFD, Deputy Chief Andrews of Burrville VFD.

Fire Marshall Timothy Tharau introduced four students from Torrington elementary schools that received awards for their Fire Prevention posters. The students were recognized for their efforts.

A motion was made by Commissioner Potter to accept the minutes of the regular meeting held February 1, 2012; seconded by Commissioner Benedetto. There was no discussion; motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Benedetto to open the meeting to the public; seconded by Commissioner Zaharek. The motion carried. No one from the public spoke.

A motion was made by Commissioner Potter to accept Fire Chief John Field's report for January, 2012; seconded by Commissioner Cook. Discussion ensued about calls made by the regular department in addition to the volunteer departments. Chief Field stated that he is working on gathering that information and will report back to the Mayor on that issue.

Commissioner Benedetto asked Chief Field how the new program was working out for the recruits. Chief Field stated that it seemed to be working well but will know better after the program is completed.

Commissioner Battle asked about the lockouts list/report. Chief Field said that the report stemmed from a discussion at the last meeting and he had provided a narrative about the lockout incidents.

Commissioner Potter said that he had gone through several pages of the list and he felt that some of them did not warrant a dispatch. He said that several years ago a decision had been made to only dispatch to lockouts that could be considered an emergency, such as a child locked in a vehicle with the motor running, etc.

Chief Field explained that following the last meeting, he had met with LCD (Litchfield County Dispatch) and went over the policies and procedures for lockouts. He said that LCD assured him that it was going to be taken care of in accordance with the Fire Department policies.

Commissioner Potter asked Chief Field if he thought there was a decrease in the amount of lockout calls after this discussion. Chief Field stated that he hadn't heard if there were as many. Commissioner Potter asked Chief Field if he knew if LCD were referring some calls to Triple A or towing services. Chief Field said he would check into that. Chief Field did state that it had been reiterated to LCD that non-emergency calls should be referred to locksmiths. He said that LCD had confirmed this information in a response back to the Fire Department.

Commissioner Benedetto said that he had witnessed a call to the Wal Mart parking lot for a lockout call where several fire vehicles, both regular and volunteer, had responded. He said that it was not an emergency and he felt that too many resources had been used in this instance. He said that he would be following up on the lockout issue.

Commissioner Battle said that she knew of an instance today where LCD had instructed a caller regarding a lockout to contact a towing service. Chief Field said that it was being worked out with LCD.

Mayor Bingham asked that since LCD dispatches for ten other towns, if there were conflicting policies in place. Deputy Chief Brunoli stated that each town did have their own policies.

There was no more discussion and the motion carried to accept Chief Field's report for January, 2012.

A motion was made by Commissioner Benedetto to accept Deputy Chief Brunoli's report for January, 2012; seconded by Commissioner Potter. No discussion; the motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Potter to accept Fire Marshall Tim Tharau's report for January, 2012; seconded by Commissioner Benedetto. No discussion; the motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Potter to accept Training Officer Larry Hepburn's report for January, 2012; seconded by Commissioner Benedetto. No discussion; the motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Potter to accept Chief Michael Maniago's report for January, 2012; seconded by Commissioner Benedetto.

Commissioner Potter asked about Chief Maniago's Incident Analysis report; he wondered if the statistics used were also used to compile the Annual Calls for Service report.

Chief Maniago said yes, that they were compiled and the report was a monthly breakdown. Chief Maniago said that there were some calls that were omitted that are administrative in nature; not every call was listed.

Commissioner Potter asked if all the calls listed on this report were included or not included in the calls for service that were referred to in the budget request. Chief Maniago stated the budget reflected a 2.5% increase this year but that there were calls for service that were not included in that report/list. He said that if the Board wanted, they would supply a print out of everything done.

Commissioner Potter said that one of the things he noticed was equipment maintenance--it was listed in the Incident Analysis but wondered why it would be considered a call for service.

Chief Maniago said that it was utilized as a call for service because in order to pick up a vehicle, two officers have to go to the Street Department which takes anywhere from 20-30 minutes, which is time that officers are using.

Commissioner Potter said that these types of calls didn't seem to fit into calls for service. Chief Maniago stated that he is trying to keep track of all time spent by officers; he said that time spent on court paperwork is also recorded. He said that he feels it is important to maintain an accurate record of what the officers are doing.

Chief Maniago said that while these types of services are administrative, it is still a call for something that the officer is being asked to do. Commissioner Potter said that he does understand that concept but he sees the issue differently in regard to budgets.

Commissioner Cook asked about weather observations; Chief Maniago said that weather observations are not noted as a call for service but are noted in case calls are adversely affected by weather.

Commissioner Cook asked if there was a case number associated with weather observations; Chief Maniago said that they are noted in the computer but do not have a case number that generates a report unless the information has to go into a case file.

Commissioner Cook said the confusing issue was whether or not the call volume had increased due to these types of calls. Chief Maniago reiterated that it was important to keep track of time spent by officers on all types of duties. He said that while it may not be what is generally considered to be police work, these things have to be taken care of.

Mayor Bingham asked the Board if it would be helpful to them if Chief Maniago tiered out the calls for services that

were considered emergencies versus those that are not.

Commissioner Potter referred to a "park and walk" call; there were 796 such calls for the month. He thought that if the officer was on patrol, parking the car and walking an area was not necessarily a "call for service" but instead part of the officer's normal routine.

Chief Maniago said that a park and walk is a specialized assignment that officers have on their patrols.

Commissioner Potter said that when discussing budgets it was important to have a true understanding of calls to justify budget expenses. Chief Maniago stated again how important it was to have a true account of time spent by officers carrying out all duties and responsibilities.

Commissioner Potter said that more discussion could occur during a budget meeting to try and get a better understanding of the issue.

Commissioner Cook asked how the Traffic Division was coming along. Chief Maniago stated that things were going well; training was discussed.

There was no further discussion; the motion to accept Chief Maniago's report carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Potter to accept Officer Pisarski's report for January, 2012; seconded by Commissioner Battle. No discussion; motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Potter to enter into Executive Session under Police Department Personnel; seconded by Commissioner Benedetto. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Benedetto to enter Open Session; seconded by Commissioner Zaharek. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cook to hire Robert Davies as a probationary police officer at the discretion of the City; seconded by Commissioner Benedetto. No discussion; motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cook to hire Douglas Parsons as a probationary police officer at the discretion of the City; seconded by Commissioner Zaharek. No discussion; motion carried. Congratulations were given to the two new officers.

A motion was made by Commissioner Potter to accept the EMS Provider Activity report for January, 2012; seconded by Commissioner Cook.

Commissioner Potter had a question about cardiac calls; he wondered if they were all assisted by the Fire Department. Mr. Rosa did not know. A brief discussion took place; Commissioner Potter said he was trying to figure out if the Fire Department had been dispatched and if so, when they may have arrived on scene.

Commissioner Potter also wondered if the Fire Department had assisted in the transport and if it would become protocol for the Fire Department to assist with transport. Mr. Rosa said that generally the Fire Department would be called to assist.

There was no further discussion; the motion to accept the EMS Provider Report was carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Benedetto to consider business by Department Heads; seconded by Commissioner Cook. Motion carried.

Chief Maniago stated that he had left information on the Regional Traffic Squad that had been discussed at last month's meeting. He gave a rundown of documents regarding this Squad. He suggested that the Board review the documents and then they could have a discussion at next month's meeting on this issue.

Commissioner Benedetto asked about the time frame to start. Chief Maniago said that if approval was given, it

would be started immediately. Mayor Bingham said that the issue would be put on next month's agenda for discussion and vote.

Chief Maniago told the Board that a new canine was donated to the department and that an officer would need to be selected to become the dog's handler. He said that there was money from previous donations to purchase items needed for this addition to the department. Chief Maniago asked if a decision could be made tonight on this as there were other police departments in line for the canine.

Commissioner Cook asked about an estimate on the number of calls currently handled by the canine. Chief Maniago did not have that information with him. Commissioner Cook asked about the amount of time it would take a patrolman to train for this assignment. Chief Maniago thought that the training course was 12 weeks. If more specialized training were needed, such as narcotics, that training would come later. But the canine would be ready for patrol after the initial 12 week training course.

Commissioner Cook asked if there were currently 2 dogs and asked the ages. Chief Maniago said yes there were 2 dogs; "Brody" was eight and "Chase" was 2 ½.

Commissioner Cook asked if the officer selected would be on third shift. Chief Maniago stated that there would be one canine on each shift—there is a rotation schedule in place and the dogs would not work the same shifts.

Commissioner Potter wondered how much time the older dog may have left in the department. Chief Maniago said that the estimate would be about 2 or 2 ½ years if the dog remains healthy.

Commissioner Cook asked if there was a good response from the officers wanting to work with the dog. Chief Maniago said the response was great. Mayor Bingham asked if this issue needed to go before a vote; the last time a canine was added to the department it was not voted on by the Board. There was general agreement that the department should accept the canine and Chief Maniago expressed his thanks.

Commissioner Benedetto asked how the position/shift would be filled when the canine handler went to training. Chief Maniago said that either through staffing from support services or through overtime.

Commissioner Cook asked if any regionalization with the canine units would take place. Chief Maniago said that Torrington would respond to other towns if a canine was needed. He also said that if for any reason the TPD dogs were not available, TPD could contact other police departments such as Bristol to utilize those dogs. He said that having three dogs would hopefully put them in a situation where it was not necessary to call other departments for canines.

Commissioner Cook asked if Torrington was reimbursed for these types of calls to other towns involving dogs. Chief Maniago said no, it was a quid pro quo; police departments help one another in times of need.

Commissioner Cook asked about medical bills for the dogs; Chief Maniago said that \$2,500 per dog was budgeted for medical, food, etc.

Chief Maniago stated that he and the Deputy Chief visited Officer Vinclauskus at Southwest School; he celebrated 20 years as a DARE instructor. He was given a plaque. Officer Vinclauskus will continue to act as the DARE officer but 20 years was milestone in his career and Chief Maniago wanted to thank him for his service.

Chief Field thanked Lieutenant Kevin Hayes and Lieutenant Pete Misani for their years of service; both are retiring.

Chief Field said that on March 16th the recruits were graduating; invitations had been sent to the Board members. He hoped that everyone could attend. Chief Field said that also on the 16th is a fundraising event at Bogey's.

Mr. Rosa stated that the signage and numbering at Squire Hill is becoming a bigger problem than usual; the signage is inadequate. He said that there had been no response to written requests on this issue from Squire Hill Boards of which there are three. Nighttime is particularly bad. Mr. Rosa was unsure why Squire Hill continues to ignore this issue. He was hoping that a letter from the Board of Public Safety and/or the Mayor may have some impact.

A brief discussion followed; the houses are relatively well marked but the streets are not marked. Mr. Rosa said there were other problem areas in the City but Squire Hill was the worst.

Commissioner Potter asked about association meetings. Mayor Bingham volunteered to write a letter to Squire Hill about this issue.

A motion was made by Commissioner Benedetto to vote to consider business by Volunteer Fire Departments; seconded by Commissioner Battle. Motion carried.

Deputy Chief Andrews from the Burrville Volunteer Fire Department had left; Chief Field relayed the message that currently there are two firefighters in Firefighter One; two had graduated. They also have a elected new slate of officers.

A motion was made by Commissioner Benedetto to consider business by the Mayor and members of the Board of Public Safety; seconded by Commissioner Potter. Motion carried.

Commissioner Benedetto said that he had received phone calls on the issue of John Recchini. He said that it was important to have honesty and integrity in the police department. He asked the Board to allow an independent, forensic audit on the money collected by the police department, which would maintain the integrity of the department. He would like the entire matter to be reviewed by the States Attorney's Office.

Mayor Bingham said he would look into the costs; he said a forensic audit had been done for the tax collector but he will call the firm that performed that work and put the item on the agenda for next month's meeting. If there are costs associated for that, money would have to be found to perform the audit.

Commissioner Benedetto said he had been contacted by residents about this. He felt that it was not handled in the right manner. He said that he feels an outside agent should review it.

Chief Maniago asked for clarification; was Commissioner Benedetto talking about all monies collected in the department—meters, traffic, etc. Commissioner Benedetto said yes, all money collected.

Commissioner Cook asked what else would fall into that category—in monies being collected. Chief Maniago said parking meters, parking tickets, permits. Commissioner Benedetto said that he knew an audit had been done internally but he would like to have an independent auditor come in.

Mayor Bingham said an annual audit is done for the entire City which is mandated and includes the police department. This is done by an independent auditing firm. Mayor Bingham suggested that they should find out if there is anything not included in that independent audit and then audit that. This would preclude duplication of independent auditing.

Mayor Bingham said that generally an initial audit is done and if any red flags are found that would suggest criminal activity, it becomes a forensic audit. He explained the process used regarding the Tax Collector's Office and said that by jumping into a forensic audit it becomes accusatory. He said that he doesn't believe that this is the case in this situation. He said it's really a bid of two separate pieces—one a regular audit and one a forensic audit.

Commissioner Cook asked about donations. Mayor Bingham said that all donations are also audited. Mayor Bingham said he would get that information and come back with a recommendation for the Board. He said that if there are pieces that aren't audited, they should be audited. But he said there are already controls in place and Torrington does very well in their audits.

Commissioner Benedetto stated again that it was important to have honesty and integrity in the police department. He stated that there needed to be checks and balances.

Chief Maniago stated that there already was honesty and integrity in the police department and he took offense to the insinuation that there was not. He said that a mistake had been made; there had been an investigation and disciplinary action had been taken.

Commissioner Benedetto stated that a written reprimand did not fit the crime. He stated that it was his opinion that a criminal investigation should have been done.

Mayor Bingham said he would try and get the information as soon as possible.

Commissioner Benedetto asked if anyone objected to this matter being sent to the State Attorney's Office. He thought they should be contacted to make a decision as to whether or not an investigation should take place by that office.

Commissioner Potter thanked Kevin Hayes and Pete Misani for their years of service.

Commissioner Cook also thanked the firefighters for their service.

Commissioner Battle offered her congratulations as well. She stated that as far as the Rechini situation, she was interested in the regular audit—the internal investigation. Mayor Bingham said he would get her that information.

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Benedetto; seconded by Commissioner LaMoncia. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:01.

ATTEST: Joseph L. Quartiero, CMC
CMC

Beth Murphy,
Recording Secretary