

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Board of Public Safety was held on Wednesday, June 3, 2020. In response to the Governor's Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, this meeting was held remotely using the ZOOM online meeting platform. Participants included Mayor Elinor Carbone and Commissioners Dustin Bingham, Joseph McElroy, Robert Conforti, Darlene Battle and Glenn McLeod. Commissioner Douglas Benedetto joined the meeting at 6:34 p.m. However, he was unable to participate or vote due to technical difficulties until Business by Department Heads.

Also present were Police Chief William Baldwin, Jr., Fire Chief Peter Towey, Deputy Fire Chief David Tripp, Trinity Health EMT Mark Zarrella, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital Emergency Management Director Paul Rabeuf, Corporation Counsel Victor Muschell and City Clerk Carol Anderson.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

On a motion by Commissioner Bingham, seconded by Commissioner Conforti, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the regular meeting held May 6, 2020.

POLICE SERGEANT ADDED TO TRAFFIC DIVISION

On a motion by Commissioner Conforti, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, the Board voted unanimously to increase the number of Sergeants within the Torrington Police Department from 13 to 14, effective immediately.

Chief Baldwin informed the Board that the current Traffic Division Supervisor, Officer Steven Pisarski, would be retiring at the end of 2020 and he explained the need for a Sergeant in the Traffic Division. Commissioner Conforti requested clarification regarding the responsibilities of the position and Chief Baldwin reported that other personnel within the Traffic Division share some of the workload in addition to an administrative Sergeant who oversees the Division. The Chief praised Officer Pisarski for his work within the Traffic Division and stated that he hopes to fill the Sergeant position with someone who will stay in the position for a long time. Commissioner Bingham expressed concern that there would be no way of guaranteeing that someone would stay in the position and the Chief acknowledged that was true but stated that he would be looking for a long-term commitment from the person that gets selected for the position. Commissioner McLeod suggested that if done correctly the position could make the City money and Chief Baldwin agreed that there was an opportunity to boost revenue through extra duty construction jobs.

BUSINESS BY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS

On a motion by Commissioner Conforti, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by the Volunteer Fire Departments. No business was reported.

BUSINESS BY DEPARTMENT HEADS

On a motion by Commissioner Battle, seconded by Commissioner Conforti, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by Department Heads.

Chief Baldwin described the need to increase the administrative fee for extra duty construction jobs. He also informed the Board that he hoped to enter into agreements with the police departments of surrounding municipalities to address unfilled extra duty jobs for road construction projects.

Commissioner McLeod questioned why some road jobs require police officers and others do not. Chief Baldwin explained that the amount of traffic, pedestrians in the area, safety concerns and construction company policies all play a role in determining whether one or more police officers are necessary.

Commissioner Bingham requested information regarding an incident that occurred on Kennedy Drive and Chief Baldwin clarified that the road was closed due to a car accident.

Commissioner Battle requested clarification regarding the Board of Public Safety's role in adjusting the administrative fee for extra duty construction jobs and questioned how MOUs with surrounding towns would benefit the TPD. The Mayor clarified that the Chief was looking for guidance on the administrative fee and Chief Baldwin explained that the agreements would allow officers from other surrounding towns to fill extra duty assignments when the City has several road construction jobs going on at the same time and not enough officers to fill the demand. He further clarified that the MOUs would also give the TPD the ability to collect additional fees by taking extra duty assignments in other towns.

Commissioner Benedetto requested clarification regarding the rate of pay that officers receive for extra duty construction jobs and the Chief explained that the construction companies are billed based on the rate structure established by each Department. He noted that some Police Departments charge a flat rate while others bill based on each officer's normal rate of pay.

Chief Baldwin also condemned the actions of the officers involved in the death of George Floyd and discussed the ramifications of the incident on the police profession. He expressed his appreciation to be a part of the peaceful protest at Coe Park and Commissioner McLeod thanked the Chiefs and the Mayor for attending the event. Commissioner Conforti acknowledged the failure of the Minneapolis Police Department and expressed his support for the TPD.

Chief Towey also expressed his appreciation to be part of the event at Coe Park and thanked the Torrington community for their generosity and support during the COVID-19 pandemic. He provided an update on the City's long-term recovery plan and expressed his appreciation for the funds allocated to the TFD in the 2020/2021 fiscal year budget.

Deputy Chief Tripp thanked the Torrington fire fighters and C.E.R.T. volunteers for their efforts over the past several months.

BUSINESS BY THE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

On a motion by Commissioner McLeod, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by the Mayor and members of the Board of Public Safety.

Commissioner Bingham thanked the Chiefs for their response to COVID-19 and the George Floyd incident.

Commissioner McElroy thanked Torrington's first responders.

Commissioner Benedetto agreed that the TPD's Traffic Division needs a supervisor and asked Chief Baldwin if he planned to bring another officer into the Traffic Division for added support. Chief Baldwin stated that was a goal of his but noted that there were more pressing personnel needs within the TPD. Commissioner Benedetto also requested clarification regarding the responsibilities of the Traffic Division Sergeant and Chief Baldwin explained the supervisory duties that the position would have. In addition, Commissioner Benedetto questioned whether it was necessary for the TFD to respond to incidents involving persons locked out of their homes or places of business and expressed his concerns about the availability of emergency personnel. Chief Towey discussed the liability of not responding to those calls and stated that he would err on the side of caution. He also clarified that in cases of emergency, TFD personnel responding to service calls such as lockout incidents would move their response to the emergency situation immediately.

Commissioner Conforti thanked the Chiefs and the Mayor for their leadership.

Commissioner McLeod asked Chief Baldwin if it would be necessary to advertise and test for the new Sergeant position in the Traffic Department. Chief Baldwin stated that there was one individual on the existing list of officers eligible for the position but he clarified that the TPD would still need to advertise the position because the Department's existing Sergeants could apply as well. He noted that the rank of Sergeant was highly sought-after and there would be significant interest in the position.

Commissioner Battle thanked the Chiefs for their work during the COVID-19 crisis and for their support in response to the George Floyd incident.

Mayor Carbone provided an update regarding the mill rate and budgets and assured the Board that the additional reductions still needed for the City's budget would not impact the Police or Fire Departments' budgets. However, she expressed concern for the TPD's Animal Control Division and stated that she would work with Chief Baldwin to develop a strategy to move the project forward. Chief Baldwin emphasized the importance of replacing the animal control facility.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner McLeod, seconded by Commissioner Conforti, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jonathan R. Draper, Asst. City Clerk

ATTEST: 
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK