

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Board of Public Safety was held in the City Hall auditorium on Wednesday, August 5, 2020. In response to the Governor's Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, members of the public were able to attend this meeting remotely using the ZOOM online meeting platform. Board members and City staff also had the option to join the meeting remotely.

The meeting was attended in-person by Mayor Elinor Carbone, Fire Chief Peter Towey, Police Chief William Baldwin, Jr., Deputy Fire Chief David Tripp and Commissioners Douglas Benedetto, Dustin Bingham, Glenn McLeod, Joseph McElroy and Darlene Battle.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for the passing of Commissioner Robert Conforti, Jr.

MINUTES

On a motion by Commissioner Bingham, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held July 8, 2020. Commissioner Battle abstained.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORTS

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Fire Chief's reports. Commissioner Benedetto requested an update on the City's COVID-19 response. Chief Towey reported that hospitalizations are down and more people are getting tested but masks and other precautions are still encouraged in light of the virus's resurgence in other parts of the country. Commissioner Bingham asked whether any new protocols were developed for conducting fire drills in schools as a result of COVID-19 and Chief Towey reported that he was working with Torrington Public Schools to develop strategies appropriate for in-person or hybrid learning models. Commissioner McLeod asked what role the Fire Department has in response to downed trees or power lines and Chief Towey explained that the TFD secures the area and notifies Eversource if power lines are involved. Chief Towey also informed the Board that Eversource needed to ensure safety from downed power lines before shifting its focus to restoring power. Commissioner Benedetto requested clarification regarding the placement of temporary stop signs at busy intersections where lights were down and Chief Baldwin explained that the State is responsible for placing signs on State roads.

DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF'S REPORTS

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to accept Deputy Fire Chief Tripp's reports. Commissioner Benedetto requested an equipment update and Chief Towey reported that Truck 1 was temporarily out of service.

TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORTS

On a motion by Commissioner Bingham, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, the Board voted unanimously to accept Training Officer Shopey's reports.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REPORTS

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Emergency Management reports. Commissioner Benedetto asked who people with medical issues should contact for help with medical needs. Chief Towey stated that any person facing a medical emergency should call 9-1-1. He also recommended that individuals contact their medical providers to order additional prescriptions if needed and he noted that Elderly Services Director Joel Sekorski began wellness checks for some of the City's at-risk elderly population.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORTS

On a motion by Commissioner McElroy, seconded by Commissioner Bingham, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Fire Marshal's reports.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORTS

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Police Chief's reports. Torrington resident Norell Gudaitis presented paintings to Chief Baldwin. Commissioner Benedetto asked whether the Torrington Police Department was open for pistol permits and Chief Baldwin reported that the TPD returned to normal hours for that service.

INQUIRY REGARDING FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT

Commissioner Bingham requested an update on the property at 403 Tarringford West Street which experienced a fire on June 17, 2020. Mayor Carbone reported that the City was informed by the insurance company that the structure would be torn down and the property would be re-seeded within 60 days.

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS UNIT REPORT

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Traffic Operations Unit report. Commissioner Benedetto asked Chief Baldwin which department was responsible for placing stop signs on City roads and the Chief reported that it was the responsibility of the Traffic Division. He also discussed the challenge of securing enough stop signs to meet the demand during widespread power outages.

EMS PROVIDER ACTIVITY REPORTS

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to accept the EMS provider activity reports.

BUSINESS BY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by the volunteer fire departments. Drakeville VFD Chief David Maccalous updated the Board on the DVFD's annual meeting which was held in July and reported that the DVFD responded to fifteen calls on August 4, 2020 due to Tropical Storm Isaias. Commissioner McLeod requested an update on the clearing of Marshall Lake Road and Chief Maccalous reported that Eversource was on its way.

POLICE DEPARTMENT UNIFORMS

On a motion by Commissioner McElroy, seconded by Commissioner Battle, the Board voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Purchasing Agent and Lt. Thomas Rouleau and approve the award of partial bids for Police Department uniforms to New England Uniform, LLC of Danbury, CT for the annualized estimate of \$63,858.50 and OGS Technologies, Inc. of Cheshire, CT for the annualized estimate of \$1,981 as described in Lt. Rouleau's memo dated July 16, 2020. Commissioner McLeod questioned why New England Uniform, LLC and OGS Technologies, Inc. were recommended over the other bidders and requested that an explanation be included in bid packets for future contract awards. Chief Baldwin explained that the Purchasing Agent rejects bids that do not meet certain standards and agreed to include explanations, as requested, for future Police Department purchases. Commissioner Benedetto questioned why the recommendation was to split the bid between two companies and Chief Baldwin explained that it was the most cost effective option.

BUSINESS BY DEPARTMENT HEADS

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

Chief Towey expressed his condolences for the passing of Commissioner Conforti. He also commended the work of his colleagues and firefighters in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and Tropical Storm Isaias.

Chief Baldwin expressed his condolences to the families of Commissioner Conforti and retired police officer William Sulkazi. He reported that the month of July was busy with incidents including robberies, burglaries, overdoses and a fatal accident. The Chief commended his officers and discussed that challenges and shortfalls of the new legislation for a police accountability law. He credited the Mayor and Rep. Cook for speaking out against the legislation and expressed his concerns regarding the cost that new mandates and certifications would have on the TPD budget. Commissioners Benedetto and McLeod requested clarification regarding storage and access to police body camera recordings. Chief Baldwin stated that the recordings are kept indefinitely and he discussed some of the statutes and regulations guiding access to the recordings. Commissioner Bingham echoed Chief Baldwin's concerns about the new legislation with particular attention to the cost of liability insurance. Commissioners Benedetto and Battle expressed their trust in the judgment and training of Torrington police officers.

Deputy Chief Tripp provided an update on road clearing and power restoration efforts. He thanked the volunteer fire departments and reported that Marshall Lake Road was clear.

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

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

Commissioner Bingham commented on the positive impact that Commissioner Conforti had on the community and informed the Board that he would miss the next meeting due to the anticipated birth of his child.

Commissioner McElroy expressed his condolences for the passing of Commissioner Conforti. He also requested an update on Summer Street and reported that a stop sign on Hillandale Blvd. was down. Chief Baldwin reported that the City could not do anything about Summer Street.

Commissioner Benedetto expressed his condolences for the passing of Commissioner Conforti. He thanked the public safety departments for their response to Tropical Storm Isaias and expressed his support for the volunteer fire departments. He also thanked Ms. Gudaitis for her support of the public safety departments.

Commissioner McLeod thanked the Chiefs for their regular communication with the Board members and he expressed his appreciation for Commissioner Conforti.


Commissioner Battle expressed her condolences for the passing of Commissioner Conforti and thanked the Chiefs and first responders for their response to Tropical Storm Isaias.

Mayor Carbone expressed her gratitude for Commissioner Conforti and William Sulkazi and gave her condolences to their families. She also expressed her concerns regarding the police accountability bill and the new travel ban put in place by Gov. Lamont. Lastly, the Mayor commended the Public Works and Public Safety personnel for their coordinated efforts to address the damage and public safety concerns caused by Tropical Storm Isaias.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:56 p.m.

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

ATTEST: 
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK