

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Board of Public Safety was held in the City Hall auditorium on Wednesday, November 4, 2020. In response to the Governor's Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, members of the public were able to attend the 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, Police Chief William Baldwin, Jr., Fire Chief Peter Towey, Deputy Fire Chief David Tripp, Drakeville VFD Chief David Maccalous, Trinity Health EMS Manager Jeff Ganung and Commissioners Douglas Benedetto, Dustin Bingham, Joseph McElroy and Gregg Cogswell. Commissioner Glenn McLeod and Corporation Counsel Victor Muschell participated by ZOOM. Commissioner Darlene Battle was absent.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES: APPROVED

On a motion by Commissioner Bingham, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held October 7, 2020.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT: APPROVED

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Police Chief's report. Commissioner Benedetto requested an update on the underage drinking grant and Chief Baldwin reported that the TPD was working to identify perpetrators.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT: APPROVED

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Bingham, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Fire Chief's report.

DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT: APPROVED

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, the Board voted unanimously to accept Deputy Fire Chief Tripp's report.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REPORT: APPROVED

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Cogswell, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Emergency Management report.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT: APPROVED

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

EMS PROVIDER ACTIVITY REPORT: APPROVED

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

BUSINESS BY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Bingham, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by the volunteer fire departments. Drakeville VFD Chief David Maccalous reported that the Drakeville VFD gained a couple of new members and Engine 35 participated in the Camp Moe Trunk or Treat event.

BUSINESS BY DEPARTMENT HEADS

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

Chief Towey discussed the impact of COVID-19 on Fire Department personnel and he expressed the need to upgrade the TFD's radio system.

Chief Baldwin reported that he interviewed 15 new applicants and five conditional job offers were awarded. The Chief announced that a 12-game P.A.L. basketball season was scheduled and he updated the Board on Election Day activity, the National Drug Take Back Day and Trunk or Treat event which the TPD participated in. Chief Baldwin also commended members of the Detective Division for successful investigations leading to arrests, including Det. Fador and Det. Dablain. Commissioner Bingham encouraged increased outreach and communication to promote future Drug Takeback events and asked if any of the deliveries could be tied to ongoing investigations. The Chief explained that the drop-offs were completely anonymous. Commissioner Cogswell requested information regarding the security of cell phone towers. Chief Baldwin reported that the buildings were secure and some were equipped with alarm systems. Chief Towey also discussed some of the issues with irregular cell phone service. Lastly, Chief Baldwin reported that two officers were graduating from the Police Academy on Friday, November 6, 2020.

Trinity Health EMS Manager Jeff Ganung announced that Trinity purchased eight new ambulances. Upon the request of Commissioner Benedetto, Mr. Ganung described some of the technology upgrades in the new vehicles. Commissioner Bingham asked where the new ambulances would be dispatched and Mr. Ganung described how they would likely be split between Torrington, Waterbury and Cheshire. Commissioner Bingham also questioned what would happen to the decommissioned ambulances and Mr. Ganung reported that some in the past were donated to developing countries.

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

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

Commissioner McLeod and Commissioner Bingham commended the public for their conduct at the polls and thanked the police for their support on Election Day.

Commissioner Benedetto congratulated Representatives Cook, Horn and Case on their reelections and expressed his concerns about filling police vacancies and retaining officers. Chief Baldwin reported that the TPD would be re-testing for promotions within the Department and he discussed the statewide issue of retaining police officers. The Chief explained that the TPD's salaries were comparable to other police departments and officers had ample opportunities to increase their salaries through overtime. He also stated that the work environment at the TPD was positive. Commissioner Benedetto questioned the impact of eliminating police pensions and Chief Baldwin explained that many other police departments in CT transitioned away from pensions plans as well. Commissioner McLeod expressed frustration regarding police overtime and the need for officers to cover so many extra shifts.

Commissioner Cogswell thanked the police for their presence at the polling locations on Election Day and asked Chief Baldwin about the availability of certified officers to fill police vacancies. The Chief explained that many officers seek less active departments as they progress in their careers.


Mayor Carbone invited Cultural Affairs Committee members Angaza Mwando and Tamara Williams to present their request to paint a Black Lives Matter mural on the municipal parking lot adjacent to City Hall Avenue. Mr. Mwando and Ms. Williams described where they wanted the mural to be painted and explained why they felt it was important for the Torrington community. Commissioner Bingham expressed concerns about safety when the painted surface gets wet and questioned the process by which the Cultural Affairs Committee chooses which projects to move forward. He also asked the Mayor whether the City had a formal policy pertaining to public art and Mayor Carbone reported that no policy was adopted yet. In addition, Commissioner Bingham asked the Cultural Affairs Committee representatives if they approached any private business owners with their request and Mr. Mwando stated that he received encouraging feedback for another art project from real estate developer Vincent Cappelletti.

In closing, Mayor Carbone discussed the recent resurgence of COVID-19 and the Governor's step back to Phase 2.1 reopening. She recommended that future meetings be conducted remotely using Zoom, with only Board members permitted to attend in-person at City Hall. Commissioner Benedetto requested clarification regarding enforcement of the Governor's limits on public gatherings and the Mayor described the team approach that the City has taken in conjunction with the TPD and the Torrington Area Health District.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:30 p.m.

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

ATTEST: 
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK