

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Board of Public Safety was held in the City Hall auditorium on Wednesday, January 6, 2021. In response to the Governor's Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, in-person access to the meeting was limited to Board members, City staff and other key personnel on agenda items only. 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 and Commissioners Douglas Benedetto, Gregg Cogswell and Joseph McElroy. Police Chief William Baldwin, Jr., Captain Louis Gonzalez, Fire Chief Peter Towey, Deputy Fire Chief David Tripp, Drakeville VFD Chief David Maccalous, Trinity Health EMS Manager Jeff Ganung and Commissioners Dustin Bingham and Darlene Battle participated by ZOOM. Commissioner Glenn McLeod 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 Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Cogswell, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held December 2, 2020.

**POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT: APPROVED**

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Police Chief's report. Commissioner Benedetto requested an update on overtime figures and staffing. Chief Baldwin reported that the TPD expended 43% of its overtime budget to date and 73 of the Department's 80 positions were filled. He further explained some of the challenges with staffing, including the retirement of Lt. Calabrese, having several officers on FTO or in the Police Academy and limited availability of seats in upcoming Police Academy classes.

**FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT: APPROVED**

On a motion by Commissioner McElroy, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Fire Chief's report. Commissioner Benedetto requested an update on overtime figures and Chief Towey reported that the TFD was 70% expended on its overtime budget for the year. He explained that the overtime was primarily a result of shift coverage due to personnel being out sick or utilizing vacation time that would have expired on December 31, 2020. Commissioner Cogswell asked if the ice rescue incident at Burr Pond that occurred in February, 2020 resulted in any changes to the way that Burr Pond was monitored for safety. Chief Towey explained that the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) monitors ice conditions and posts signage to encourage safe practices but the onus of responsibility falls primarily on the members of the public.

**DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT: APPROVED**

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

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REPORT: APPROVED**

On a motion by Commissioner McElroy, seconded by Commissioner Cogswell, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Emergency Management report. Commissioner Benedetto requested a briefing on the road collapse and water main break incident that occurred at Winthrop Street on October 6, 2020. Deputy Chief Tripp described the events that occurred and how the TFD and DPW responded to restore water to the area and keep the public safe. He also thanked the Drakeville VFD for providing support.

**EMS PROVIDER ACTIVITY REPORT: APPROVED**

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Cogswell, the Board voted unanimously to accept the EMS provider activity report. Commissioner Cogswell requested clarification regarding mutual aid responses from neighboring municipalities and Trinity Health EMS Manager Jeff Ganung explained that mutual aid scenarios arise when multiple events occur at or around the same time. Commissioner Benedetto also requested clarification regarding firefighter assists and Mr. Ganung explained that the incidents referenced on the report were emergency responses where the Fire Department was dispatched after Trinity arrived on scene.

**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 tires on the DVFD's tanker were in need of replacement, per NFPA guidelines. He noted that replacing the eight remaining tires would cost an additional \$4,200 that was not budgeted for. He also provided updates on training and membership and reported that one member was quarantining due to COVID-19. Commissioner Benedetto asked if the tanker was still in service and Chief Maccalous reported that it was. Chief Towey expressed the need to replace the tires and stated his concerns about liability. Mayor Carbone agreed and proposed bringing the matter to the City Council to consider utilizing contingency funds.

**ITEM ADDED TO THE AGENDA**

On a motion by Commissioner Cogswell, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to add an item to the agenda for the purpose of recommending that the City Council take action regarding the replacement of the Drakeville VFD tanker's tires.

**REFERRAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

On a motion by Commissioner Cogswell, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to refer to the City Council a recommendation to utilize contingency funds for the acquisition and installation of replacement tires for the Drakeville VFD's tanker.

**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 Baldwin wished everyone a Happy New Year, reported on the retirement of Lt. Calabrese and resignation of Officer Crowley, announced that a promotional exam for sergeants and lieutenants would take place on January 15, 2021 and stated that two new Torrington police officers were ready to start the police academy. The Chief also reported on the vaccination of police officers, the suspension of P.A.L. activities, and the success of the Police Union's Toy Drive. Lastly, Chief Baldwin discussed the potential impact that unfunded state mandates arising from the Police Accountability Bill might have on the TPD's budget and he informed the Board that one of his captains would be joining him at each of the Board of Public Safety meetings moving forward. Commissioner Cogswell requested clarification as to why the new legislation would require police departments to purchase dash cams if every officer is already equipped with a body cam. Chief Baldwin explained that the dash cams provide steadier footage and a viewing angle that body cams may not capture. Commissioner Benedetto expressed concerns about additional expenses that could be incurred for the storage of additional footage and the potential increase in Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. Chief Baldwin explained that the TPD's contract with AXON includes unlimited storage and he clarified that an administrative sergeant was responsible for handling all of the Police Department's FOI requests.

Torrington VFD, which was unable to comment earlier in the meeting due to connection issues, reported on equipment repairs and the need for a new motor.

Chief Towey wished everyone a Happy New Year, stated that he would connect with other City departments to find alternative uses for the DVFD's existing tires, reported that the next Fire Service Coordination Committee meeting was scheduled for January 13, 2021 and commended the Firefighters Union on their successful Toy Drive. The Chief also thanked Charlotte Hungerford Hospital and the Torrington Area Health District for their rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines and provided an update on grant applications that the TFD would be applying to acquire new SCBAs and improve the TFD's radio system. Commissioner Benedetto requested updated figures regarding COVID-19 cases in Torrington and Chief Towey reported that Torrington's curve was flatter than most of Litchfield County and the State. Commissioner Benedetto also requested an update on the COVID-19 testing site at Stop & Shop and asked Chief Towey and Chief Baldwin if they were requiring all firefighters and police officers to get vaccinated. Chief Towey reported that the new testing site was off to a good start and both chiefs stated that vaccinations were not mandatory. Commissioner Bingham asked which version of the vaccination was being deployed in Torrington and Chief Towey reported that the TAHD was using the Moderna vaccine.

Deputy Chief Tripp thanked the Community Health and Wellness Center for their support providing COVID-19 testing for firefighters. Commissioner Benedetto asked when the TFD received their vaccinations and whether any of the firefighters experienced side effects. Deputy Chief Tripp reported that the first round of vaccinations was conducted on December 26, 2020 and only mild nausea and tiredness was reported by a small number of vaccine recipients. Commissioner Bingham asked how long someone should wait after testing positive for COVID-19 to get the vaccine. Deputy Chief Tripp reported that the latest guidance he received was that individuals should wait a minimum of 14 days and Chief Towey encouraged individuals with questions or concerns to consult with their medical professionals.

**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 Bingham stated his disgust with the mob of people rioting at the U.S. Capitol and he wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Commissioner Battle wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Commissioner Cogswell commended the Police and Fire Unions on their holiday Toy Drives and expressed his concerns regarding the Police Accountability Bill. He proposed submitting a letter to Torrington's representatives regarding the new legislation and Commissioner Benedetto suggested inviting them to attend the next Board of Public Safety meeting. Chief Baldwin expressed his appreciation for the Board's concerns and Mayor Carbone agreed that she would reach out to the legislators and begin drafting a letter to be circulated.

Commissioner Benedetto wished everyone a Happy New Year and expressed his support for sending a letter of concern to Torrington’s legislators regarding the Police Accountability Bill. He also welcomed Captain Gonzalez and shared safety concerns regarding telephone poles in the Police Department’s parking lot.


Commissioner McElroy thanked all of the first responders for their actions throughout the year 2020.

Mayor Carbone reported that she received notice from the CT Office of Policy and Management that the City of Torrington will receive a reimbursement in the amount of \$528,508.48 to offset COVID-19 related expenses. She also reported that the City, in conjunction with the Torrington Area Health District and Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, identified The Armory as the location for the distribution of COVID-19 vaccinations, which would begin late January, 2021. Lastly, the Mayor discussed the budget process and informed the Board that she intends to begin budget discussions with them in February, 2021.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Commissioner Cogswell, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:51 p.m.

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

ATTEST:   
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC  
CITY CLERK