

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Board of Public Safety was held in the City Hall auditorium on Wednesday, July 7, 2021. Attendance was in-person and by Zoom. The meeting was attended in-person by Mayor Elinor Carbone, Fire Chief Peter Towey, Police Chief William Baldwin, Jr., Police Captain Louis Gonzalez, Trinity Health EMS Manager Jeff Ganung, and Board of Public Safety Commissioners Douglas Benedetto, Glenn McLeod, Dustin Bingham, Joseph McElroy, and Gregg Cogswell. Tarringford VFD Commissioners Gary Delmonte and Scott Mills were also in attendance. Board of Public Safety Commissioner Darlene Battle was absent.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

On a motion by Commissioner Cogswell, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to open the meeting to the public. There was no one from the public who wished to speak.

**MINUTES: APPROVED**

On a motion by Commissioner McElroy, seconded by Commissioner Bingham, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held May 5, 2021.

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Cogswell, the Board discussed the minutes of the special meeting held jointly with the City Council on June 2, 2021. Commissioner McLeod made a motion to amend the minutes to identify the attendees Gary Delmonte and Scott Mills as Commissioners of the Tarringford VFD. Commissioner Cogswell seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes, as amended. Commissioner McElroy abstained.

**ANIMAL CONTROL FACILITY DONATION**

Chief Baldwin recognized Torrington sisters Julia and Alina Lopez for collecting donations totaling \$2,000, as well as dog beds and home-made dog treats for the animal control facility. The girls presented the \$2,000 check donation to Lead Animal Control Officer Caitlin Nield.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Bingham, the Board voted unanimously to enter Executive Session at 6:38 p.m., pursuant to C.G.S. §1-200(6)(A), to discuss the promotion of Police Department personnel. They were joined by Chief Baldwin.

**OPEN SESSION**

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Cogswell, the Board voted unanimously to enter Open Session at 6:58 p.m.

**PROMOTION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL**

On a motion by Commissioner McLeod, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, the Board voted unanimously to approve the promotion of Sgt. Gregory Wityak to the rank of Lieutenant, effective immediately.

On a motion by Commissioner McElroy, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to approve the promotion of Officer Matthew Gonska to the rank of Sergeant, effective immediately.

On a motion by Commissioner McElroy, seconded by Commissioner Bingham, the Board voted unanimously to approve the promotion of Officer Nicholas Lettieri to the rank of Sergeant, effective immediately.

Chief Baldwin introduced Lt. Wityak, Sgt. Gonska, and Sgt. Lettieri. He summarized the officers' accolades and described the duties of Sergeant and Lieutenant. Mayor Carbone swore them in and the officers received pins for their new ranks. Sgt. Gonska received his pin from his father. Sgt. Lettieri received his pin from his wife. Lt. Wityak received his pin from his wife and daughters.

Following the pinning ceremonies, Chaplain Chip Warner gave a closing prayer.

**COMPLETION OF PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to accept Officer David Curtain as a regular member of the Torrington Police Department, having successfully completed his probationary period, effective June 15, 2021.

**PRESENTATION: PUPPIES BEHIND BARS**

Chief Baldwin provided a brief overview of the *Puppies Behind Bars* program. He explained how the program will benefit the TPD, described how *Puppies Behind Bars* has evolved over the years and thanked Jon Alfano for his commitment to contribute \$3,500 annually to cover the animal's expenses over the next three years. TPD Officer Hannah Yabrosky presented additional details regarding the *Puppies Behind Bars* program, including the purpose of service K9s, their benefits, and how they can be utilized by police departments. Officer Danielle Durette and K9 Indy of the Naugatuck Police Department gave a demonstration of Indy's skills and Officer Durette described how Indy has helped the NPD and the citizens of Naugatuck. Mayor Carbone requested clarification regarding the anticipated timeline for the TPD to receive its K9. Chief Baldwin reported that Officer Yabrosky would return with the K9 ready for service at the beginning of August, 2021, after she completes the required training.

**POLICE CHIEF’S REPORTS: APPROVED**

On a motion by Commissioner Bingham, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Police Chief’s reports. Commissioner Benedetto requested an update on the TPDs DUI enforcement, Click It or Ticket, and underage drinking grants. Captain Gonzalez reported on the grants and expressed optimism that the TPD would be awarded the grants again.

**FIRE CHIEF’S REPORTS: APPROVED**

On a motion by Commissioner McElroy, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Fire Chief’s reports. Commissioner Benedetto requested an update on the TFDs new truck. Chief Towey explained that there was an active recall on the unit, but a solution was identified and work will be completed by early next week. Chief Towey also reported that the firefighters will need to be trained on how to operate the new truck.

**DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF’S REPORTS: APPROVED**

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Cogswell, the Board voted unanimously to accept Deputy Fire Chief Tripp’s reports.

**TRAINING OFFICER’S REPORTS: APPROVED**

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

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REPORTS: APPROVED**

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

**EMS PROVIDER ACTIVITY REPORTS: APPROVED**

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, 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 Bingham, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by the volunteer fire departments. Tarringford VFD Commissioner Scott Mills reported that Tarringford’s car show was scheduled to take place on August 6, 2021.

**BUSINESS BY DEPARTMENT HEADS**

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

Chief Baldwin provided updates on P.A.L events, including two golf camps at Green Woods Country Club, the D.A.R.E. car show, Summer Fest, and Carnival. He also reported that a tower on Highland Ave. was struck by lightning, causing issues to the TPD’s radio communications. In addition, Chief Baldwin reported on the TPD’s bike patrol and park and walk efforts, gave his condolences to the family of retired TPD Lieutenant Nicholas Romaniello, who passed away on July 1, 2021, and updated the Board on the filling of police vacancies.

Commissioner McElroy requested information regarding the rise in car break-ins. Chief Baldwin reported that it is an issue throughout the region. He offered possible explanations, including insufficient penalties for juveniles, described some of the measures that the TPD is taking, and suggested that people take precautionary measures, including locking doors and removing valuables from vehicles.

Commissioner Bingham expressed his concerns regarding the police accountability bill and the legalization of cannabis for recreational use. Chief Baldwin clarified that officers were never immune from being penalized for unlawful behavior and noted that the new legislation is prompting some senior officers to leave the profession. Chief Baldwin also discussed the issue of enforcement with respect to underage possession of marijuana and operation of a motor vehicle while under the influence. Chief Baldwin and the Mayor also noted that the City may attempt to restrict smoking in public places and/or limit the sale of recreational cannabis by way of ordinance and/or zoning regulations, respectively. Commissioner McLeod suggested that the City look for direction from municipalities in other states that have successfully legalized recreational marijuana.

Chief Towey reported that Lt. Brown will be resigning from the TFD on July 25, 2021. He also provided updates on the promotion and recruitment of Fire Department personnel, reported that FF Deering will be deployed overseas again for six to nine months, and discussed the success of the CT Fire Academy Vehicle Machinery Rescue Technician Program which the TFD hosted. In addition, Chief Towey reported that the City started the implementation process for the Everbridge Mass Notification System and reported that the TFD entered into the OSHA Voluntary Compliance Consulting program.

Commissioner Benedetto questioned why Lt. Brown decided to leave the TFD and Chief Towey explained that Lt. Brown was leaving to go work for another municipality that has a fixed-benefit retirement package. Commissioner Benedetto expressed his frustration and urged the City to consider offering pensions to public safety personnel again. Mayor Carbone noted the high cost of pensions to municipalities.

Trinity Health EMS Manager Jeff Ganung reported on a fatal incident involving a five-month who experienced cardiac arrest. He thanked the Police and Fire Departments for their assistance.

**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 Benedetto expressed concerns about motorcycle accidents and the speed of vehicles on Winsted Road. Chief Baldwin confirmed that multiple motorcycle fatalities were under investigation and he described some of the efforts that the TPD has taken to address the issue. Captain Gonzalez noted that motor vehicle accidents involving motorcycles were on the rise statewide. Commissioner Benedetto also questioned why there were no parking meters for thirty spots behind Franklin Street and Mayor Carbone explained that the City was waiting to install parking meters because of construction on Franklin Street. However, the Mayor clarified that the parking spots were being turned over to the Traffic Division and kiosks would be installed. In addition, Commissioner Benedetto requested clarification regarding the time limits and restrictions pertaining to the City's newly adopted noise ordinance and he thanked everyone who participated in the Law Enforcement Torch Run for the Special Olympics. Captain Gonzalez clarified that the accepted noise levels, as described in the noise ordinance, are different depending on time of day and location within the City.


Commissioner McLeod expressed his concerns about losing public safety personnel due to the City's retirement packages and requested that the City reexamine the cost and feasibility of reinstituting pensions.

City Clerk Carol Anderson reported on the success of a donation jar in the City Clerk's Office which yields several hundred dollars in public donations each year for the animal control facility. She also informed the Board that Asst. City Clerk Jonathan Draper earned his certification as a Certified CT Town Clerk.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Bingham, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:42 p.m.

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

ATTEST:   
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC  
CITY CLERK