

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Board of Public Safety was held in the City Hall auditorium on Wednesday, April 7, 2021. Attendance was in-person and by Zoom. The meeting was attended in-person by Mayor Elinor Carbone, Fire Chief Peter Towey, Deputy Fire Chief David Tripp, Police Chief William Baldwin, Jr., Police Captain Bart Barown, Police Sergeant Dustin Baldis, Trinity Health EMS Manager Jeff Ganung and Commissioners Douglas Benedetto, Glenn McLeod and Joseph McElroy. Economic Development Director Rista Malanca, Drakeville VFD Chief David Maccalous, and Commissioners Darlene Battle and Dustin Bingham participated by ZOOM. Commissioner Gregg Cogswell was absent.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, 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 Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held February 3, 2021.

FIRE DEPARTMENT PROMOTIONAL TESTING SERVICES: CONTRACT APPROVED

On a motion by Commissioner Bingham, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Purchasing Agent, Fire Chief and selection committee to authorize the City to commence the Fire Lieutenant promotional process and award the contract for promotional testing services to Research Management Associates, Inc. (RMA) of Tinley Park, IL for the total cost of \$8,500, to be funded from the 2021 fiscal year budget (Account #5284 Service Agreements), and have the Mayor act on behalf of the City regarding the execution of the contract and its administration.

Commissioner Benedetto questioned whether the City utilized RMA previously and if any local companies submitted bids. Chief Towey explained that the City's most recent contract for Fire Department promotional testing services was awarded to RMA and he noted that the bids that were submitted by Connecticut companies were significantly more expensive.

POLICE DEPARTMENT BALLISTIC VESTS: CONTRACT APPROVED

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, the Board voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Purchasing Agent and Chief of Police and authorize the City to award the contract for fourteen (14) Tactical Ballistic Entry Vests for the Torrington Police Department's Special Response Team to Tactical Police Gear of Cheshire, CT for the total cost of \$36,400.

Commissioner Benedetto asked if the ballistic vests were different from the vests that police officers wear every day and he questioned why the existing vests were being replaced. Chief Baldwin explained that the tactical ballistic entry vests were different from the Police Department's everyday vests and they were being replaced because they were beyond the manufacturer's warranty.

POLICE DEPARTMENT BALLISTIC RIFLE PLATES: CONTRACT APPROVED

On a motion by Commissioner McLeod, seconded by Commissioner Bingham, the Board voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Purchasing Agent and Chief of Police and authorize the City to award the contract for twenty-eight (28) Ballistic Rifle Plates for the Ballistic Vests for the Torrington Police Department's Special Response Team to Tactical Police Gear of Cheshire, CT for the total cost of \$10,920.

Commissioner Benedetto requested clarification that the rifle plates would not be included with the purchase of the vests and asked about the life expectancy for the plates. Captain Barown confirmed that the rifle plates were sold separate from the vests and he noted that the warranty for the rifle plates was longer than the vests.

Commissioner Battle joined the meeting by Zoom at 7:00 p.m.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORTS: APPROVED

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Police Chief's reports.

Commissioner Benedetto requested information regarding metered parking on Field Street. Chief Baldwin provided an update, including an explanation of the purpose that parking meters serve, a brief background about the installation and replacement of parking meters and kiosks on Field Street and he informed the Board that the hours of enforcement would change to 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., to account for the peak hours when the courthouse is in session. Commissioner Benedetto expressed his opposition to metered parking on Field Street and requested that parking fees be waived until the COVID pandemic passes. Chief Baldwin also addressed concerns about homeless persons near Field Street and Economic Development Director Rista Malanca further explained how metered parking helps to keep premier parking spots available for the patrons of local businesses.

Commissioner Bingham suggested that parking lot improvements, such as new or increased lighting could improve the public's comfort level for parking in the designated lots. Mayor Carbone noted that the City could only undertake parking lot improvements for City-owned lots and Sergeant Baldis described some of the other options that the Traffic Department was exploring to make metered parking more efficient, including enabling meters to accept all coins, rather than just quarters, and allowing the public to pay through an application on their mobile devices.

Commissioner McElroy expressed his support for changing the hours of enforcement to 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Commissioner McLeod noted that eliminating metered parking from Field Street could bring up questions of fairness for other businesses, including the YMCA. Commissioner Benedetto continued to question the usefulness of parking enforcement and made a motion to add to the agenda an action item to eliminate metered parking on Field Street until the State reopens all businesses to 100% capacity. No one seconded the motion and the motion field.

Lastly, Commissioner Benedetto expressed concerns about unpaid parking fines and Sgt. Baldis described some of the progress that the City was making to collect fines that date as far back as the 1980s.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORTS: APPROVED

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

Commissioner Benedetto requested information regarding mutual aid responses and Chief Towey explained the process for how the City responds to requests for mutual aid. He also addressed the Commissioner's concerns about the cost of hiring additional coverage.

DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF'S REPORTS: APPROVED

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

TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORTS: APPROVED

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, 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 McLeod, 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 McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by the volunteer fire departments. Drakeville VFD Chief David Maccalous presented a report on his Department's activities for the month of March, informed the Board that the Drakeville VFD was planning a fundraiser, reported that one of Drakeville's Captains was in training and a black helmet would be returning to duty soon and announced that his father was moving to South Carolina. Torrington VFD reported that they had guys in training and described some of the projects and repairs that were needed at the Torrington VFD, including repaving their driveway and fixing a computer.

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 reported that six officers were out due to positive COVID-19 test results. He also reported that the TPD hired two new officers and he shared his condolences regarding the passing of retired TPD officer Gerald Maule.

Chief Towey reported that one of the TFD's Lieutenants would be retiring on around July 1, 2021 and he expressed his gratitude to Charlotte Hungerford Hospital and the Torrington Area Health District.

Trinity Health EMS Manager Jeff Ganung reported that Trinity had eight new vehicles in service and two would stay in Torrington. He also reported that Trinity purchased six new Chevy Tahoe fly cars and one of them would stay in Torrington as well.

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 Benedetto expressed disappointment that his motion to put a freeze on metered parking was defeated.

Mayor Carbone updated the Board on the Veteran’s Advisory Committee’s plans for a scaled-down Memorial Day parade and ceremony.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:45 p.m.

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

ATTEST: 
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK