

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Board of Public Safety was held on Wednesday, May 6, 2020. In response to the Governor's Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, this meeting was held remotely using the ZOOM online meeting platform. Participants included Mayor Elinor Carbone and Commissioners Dustin Bingham, Joseph McElroy, Douglas Benedetto, Robert Conforti, Darlene Battle and Glenn McLeod.

Also present were Police Chief William Baldwin, Jr., Fire Chief Peter Towey, Deputy Fire Chief David Tripp, Trinity Health EMT Mark Zarrella, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital Emergency Management Director Paul Rabeuf, Personnel Director Jaime LaMere, Personnel Assistant Kelley Pleil, Corporation Counsel Victor Muschell and Drakeville VFD Chief David Maccalous.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

MINUTES

On a motion by Commissioner Bingham, seconded by Commissioner Battle, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the regular meeting held March 4, 2020.

PD SURVEILLANCE CAMERA SYSTEM UPGRADE

On a motion by Commissioner Conforti, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of Safer Places consultant Steve Bukoski, Chief William Baldwin, Captain Bart Barown and the Purchasing Agent to award the contract for the Surveillance Camera System upgrade at the Police Department headquarters in the amount of \$94,544.38 to Mammoth Security, Inc., of New Britain, CT and authorize the Mayor to act on behalf of the City regarding the execution of the contract and its administration; pending approval from the City Council and the Board of Finance.

Commissioner McLeod questioned why Mammoth Security, Inc. was selected for the contract and Chief Baldwin reported that they submitted the lowest bid. Commissioner Bingham asked if the Chief received feedback from the City of Wethersfield on their experience with the company and Chief Baldwin reported that he did not. Commissioner Benedetto asked Chief Baldwin to describe some of the updates that are needed and Chief Baldwin explained that the current system is old and out of date and does not have the ability to record.

BUDGET REVIEW & DISCUSSION

Mayor Carbone discussed the impact of the COVID-19 virus on the City's budget process and reported that Governor Lamont, through Executive Order 7(B), allowed for a cessation of budget reviews. Chief Towey and Chief Baldwin presented the proposed Fire Department and Police Department budgets for the fiscal period from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. The Board discussed the proposed budgets.

Emergency Management: On a motion by Commissioner Bingham, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, the Board voted unanimously to advance the proposed Emergency Management budget, as presented at a total of \$35,430, to the City Council for approval.

Chief Towey explained that the Emergency Management budget is supported through the Emergency Management Performance grant. Commissioner Benedetto requested clarification regarding the salaries covered in the Emergency Management budget and Chief Towey explained that distributing the duties among Chief Baldwin, Deputy Chief Tripp and himself was more cost effective than paying one Emergency Management Director a full salary.

Fire - Headquarters: On a motion by Commissioner McLeod, seconded by Commissioner Conforti, the Board voted, with five votes in favor and one (Commissioner Benedetto) opposed, to advance the proposed Fire Headquarters budget, as presented at a total of \$5,770,498, to the City Council for approval with the stipulation that the proposed budget must come back to the Board of Public Safety for further review and discussion if the City Council or Board of Finance determine that additional cuts need be made.

Chief Towey discussed the impact of the 53rd pay week for the 2020-2021 fiscal year and explained that the 3.98% increase presented in the Fire Headquarters budget was equivalent to a 2.5% increase for a normal 52-week pay year. He explained his proposed line item increases and expressed concerns about further reductions to the budget and the Board members provided their feedback. Commissioner Benedetto requested clarification regarding the proposed Clerk wage increase and Mayor Carbone explained that the increase was a result of the 53rd pay week. Commissioner Bingham requested clarification regarding the "Extra Help" line item in the proposed budget and Chief Towey explained the he anticipates there being some need to pay overtime during the 53rd pay week. Commissioner Benedetto requested an explanation of the conferences that were budgeted for and Chief Towey explained the value of attending the conferences and stated that most of the conferences are local and attended by key Fire Department personnel, including those in need of continuing education credits so that they are able to provide training in-house. Commissioner Benedetto requested additional information regarding the 24.54% reduction to the "Capital Reserve" line item and Chief Towey explained that he proposed funding capital reserves at 75% because the funds were needed elsewhere. Commissioner McLeod expressed his concerns about underfunding the Fire Department and asked Chief Towey if he had any major concerns about the safety of Fire Department personnel. Chief Towey expressed his concerns about various capital equipment, including radio communications, but assured the Board that

firefighter safety was not being compromised. Commissioner Benedetto requested clarification regarding the “Equipment Maintenance Chargeback” line item. Chief Towey confirmed that the line item refers to what the City’s Equipment Maintenance Department charges the TFD for repairs and the Chief and Mayor explained how the budgeted amount was calculated. Commissioner McLeod expressed concern that the amount of repairs would increase as the City’s vehicles age. Commissioner Benedetto questioned why the fire hydrant rental fee increased and Mayor Carbone explained that the increase was a result of the contract with the water company. Commissioner Bingham requested an explanation regarding the \$7,050 budgeted for education incentives and Chief Towey explained how the incentive program works. Commissioner Conforti commented on the savings generated through the vehicle replacement committee and Commissioners Benedetto, McElroy and McLeod discussed the life expectancy and cost of replacing fire trucks. Commissioner McLeod expressed his concerns about the long-term impact of insufficient funding for equipment maintenance and repairs and expressed his support for a modest budget increase to support the City’s public safety needs. Commissioner Benedetto expressed his opposition to any proposed budget increase while Commissioners Battle, McElroy, Bingham and Conforti expressed their support for the TFD’s budget, as presented.

Fire - Volunteers: On a motion by Commissioner Conforti, seconded by Commissioner Bingham, the Board voted unanimously to advance the proposed budget for the Volunteer Departments, as presented at a total of \$41,654, to the City Council for approval with the stipulation that the proposed budget must come back to the Board of Public Safety for further review and discussion if the City Council or Board of Finance determine that additional cuts need be made.

Chief Towey presented the proposed Volunteers budget at a 2.46% increase over the current fiscal year. Drakeville VFD Chief Maccalous expressed his frustration and described how the budget would negatively impact the Volunteer Fire Departments. Commissioners McLeod, Benedetto and Conforti expressed their appreciation for the VFDs.

Police - Headquarters: On a motion by Commissioner Conforti, seconded by Commissioner Battle, the Board voted, with five votes in favor and one (Commissioner Benedetto) opposed, to advance the proposed Police Headquarters budget, as presented with the 53rd pay period restored for a total of \$9,327,829, to the City Council for approval.

Mayor Carbone explained that the proposed Police Department budget that was presented before the Board did not include the 53rd pay week for the fiscal year 2020-2021. Chief Baldwin presented the proposed Police Headquarters budget and described the cuts that he made to his initial budget proposal. Commissioner McLeod questioned how many officers were employed by the TPD and how many positions were included in the proposed budget. Chief Baldwin clarified that the TPD had 75 officers and the budget accounted for 80. Commissioner Bingham questioned whether it would be beneficial to for the TPD to hire a deputy chief and he expressed his support for the position. Chief Baldwin explained that he would like to have a deputy chief but he could not make additional cuts to fund that position. Commissioners Conforti, McLeod and Battle also expressed their support for the deputy chief position, while Commissioner Benedetto expressed his concern about the cost to taxpayers.

Police – Animal Control: On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Bingham, the Board voted unanimously to table the discussion and vote on the proposed Animal Control budget until the City receives a response on the grant application which was submitted through the Regional Performance Incentive program for the reconstruction of the animal shelter facility.

Mayor Carbone provided an update on the grant application which was submitted through the Regional Performance Incentive program for the reconstruction of the animal shelter facility and Chief Baldwin presented the proposed Animal Control budget.

Police – Traffic: On a motion by Commissioner Conforti, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to advance the proposed Police Traffic Department budget, as presented at a total of \$389,116, to the City Council for approval.

Chief Baldwin presented the TPD’s proposed Traffic budget. He described the cuts that were made to his initial proposal and stated that salaries and compensation made up 93% of the budget.

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 Maccalous reported that Engine 35 received extensive service and repairs and he stated that the Drakeville VFD did not change its response status due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He also expressed his frustration regarding the Volunteers’ budget. Commissioner Conforti expressed his concerns and support for the VFDs.

BUSINESS BY DEPARTMENT HEADS

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

Chief Towey thanked the emergency management team and first responders for their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Deputy Chief Tripp described an incident on Highland Lake Road in which a cardiac arrest victim's family and the Fire Department successfully administered CPR and other life saving measures. He also reported that C.E.R.T. was activated and announced that a food drive was scheduled to be held on Friday, May 8, 2020 to support the local food banks.

Chief Baldwin commended the Police Officers and Chief Towey for their work during the pandemic. Commissioner Bingham asked how the Police Department handles social distancing complaints and Chief Baldwin reported that the Torrington Area Health District receives the bulk of the complaints, but when police officers get involved they try to resolve the complaints by educating the public and engaging in conversation.

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

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

Commissioner Bingham thanked Chief Towey and Chief Baldwin for their continuous feedback and information sharing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner McElroy expressed his appreciation for the public safety departments and the volunteers.

Commissioner Benedetto thanked Chief Towey, Deputy Chief Tripp and Trinity Health for successfully transporting his family member who contracted COVID-19 to the hospital.

Commissioners McLeod, Conforti and Battle thanked Chief Towey, Chief Baldwin and the Mayor and expressed their sympathy for Chief Maccalous and the volunteers.

Mayor Carbone also expressed her appreciation to the Chiefs for their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Commissioner McLeod, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to enter Executive Session, pursuant to CGS §1-200(6)(A) at 9:23 p.m. to discuss disability retirement actions for Police Department personnel. They invited Atty. Muschell, Atty. LaMere, Chief Baldwin, Kelley Pleil and Assistant City Clerk Jonathan Draper into the Executive Session.

OPEN SESSION

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Bingham, the Board voted unanimously to enter Open Session at 9:45 p.m.


DISABILITY RETIREMENT FOR OFFICER

On a motion by Commissioner McLeod, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to approve the permanent retirement of Officer Steven Cloutier based upon disability, effective May 7, 2020, pursuant to Article XXIV Pensions, Section 10 of the City's current contract with the Torrington Police Union Local #442.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner McLeod, seconded by Commissioner Conforti, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:47 p.m.

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

ATTEST: 
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK