

**MINUTES
BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY
REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL AUDITORIUM / ZOOM
February 7, 2024**

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Board of Public Safety was held on Wednesday, February 7, 2024. Attendance was in person and by Zoom. Present at the City Hall Auditorium were Mayor Elinor Carbone, Commissioners Tylar Young, Joe McElroy, Doug Benedetto, Gregg Cogswell, Glenn McLeod, and Darlene Battle, Comptroller John Monks, Fire Chief Eric Borden, Deputy Fire Chief David Tripp, Police Chief William Baldwin, Deputy Police Chief Bart Barown, Trinity Health EMS Manager Jeff Ganung, and Drakeville Captain Tomasz Kalinowski.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to open the meeting to the public.

Chief Borden, Deputy Chief Tripp, and Battalion Chief Patrick Doyle presented Senior Driver Aaron Picz, the Meritorious Service Ribbon for his dedicated service, knowledge, and leadership in the Fire Department.

Commissioner Battle arrived at 6:39 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Cogswell, the Board voted to accept the Regular meeting minutes from December 6, 2023. Commissioner Benedetto abstained.

CORRECTION TO MEETING MINUTES

On a motion by Commissioner McLeod, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted to correct the name of Officer Thomas Buzzi to Officer Jeffrey Buzzi in the accepted Meeting Minutes from March 1, 2023. Commissioner Young abstained.

HEARTSAFE COMMUNITY CERTIFICATE

Deputy Chief Tripp presented the Board with the HEARTSafe Community Certificate, awarded by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health for the City's efforts to improve survival from sudden cardiac arrest.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Commissioner Cogswell, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to enter into executive session pursuant to C.G.S. §1-200(6)(a) regarding personnel promotions, inviting Chief Borden and Deputy Chief Tripp at 6:42 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted to go into open session at 6:56 p.m.

VOTE – FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Battle, the Board voted unanimously to promote James Brown to Lieutenant effective February 11, 2024.

RECESS

On a motion by Commissioner Cogswell, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to recess at 6:57 p.m.

SWEARING IN CEREMONY

Mayor Elinor Carbone, Justice of the Peace administered the Oath of Office to James Brown, Torrington Fire Department Lieutenant.

OPEN SESSION

On a motion by Commissioner Cogswell, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to go into open session at 7:00 p.m.

COMPLETION OF THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Young, the Board voted unanimously to accept Gavin Morrell as a regular member of the Torrington Police Department, after successfully completing his probationary period effective February 10, 2024.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORTS: APPROVED

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to accept Police Chief Baldwin's reports for November and December 2023. Commissioner Benedetto asked how the new system was working for unpaid tickets, Chief Baldwin told him that being able to pay tickets online has helped. Commissioner Benedetto asked how the Department was doing with overtime, Chief Baldwin said that with being down positions, the overtime will continue for a while. Commissioner McLeod asked about the new

Police contract and Chief Baldwin explained to the Board that this was going to help recruit individuals and retain current employees. He said that this contract will help make the City more attractive to potential employees. The Police Department is using all its resources to look for new Officers, like going to Job Fairs and utilizing the ARMY Pays partnership. Commissioner Benedetto asked how many Officers the department was down, Chief Baldwin said there are currently 12, with three Officers in the Academy. Commissioner Cogswell asked how much it costs to run the Waterbury Satellite Training Facility, Deputy Chief Barown explained that larger departments can do it, as they have the staff and training officers right there. He said that other towns pay to use the facility and instructors.

FIRE CHIEF’S REPORTS: APPROVED

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to accept Fire Chief Borden’s reports for November and December 2023. Commissioner Benedetto asked how the department’s overtime is, and Chief Borden told him there are currently five vacancies in the department and one firefighter out on long-term workman’s comp. Plus, they are doing training which is being mostly reimbursed through the AFG Grant. Commissioner Benedetto asked if the department was still going on mutual aid calls, Chief Borden said that mutual aid calls will continue, especially with other towns' memberships being down also. Commissioner McLeod asked if the department had a machine to thoroughly clean the uniforms and equipment to free them from the carcinogens, and Chief Borden explained that they do have a machine, however, they are working on getting a new one, which is in the upcoming budget. The current one keeps stalling on cycles and is very old.

EMS PROVIDER ACTIVITY REPORTS: APPROVED

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner McLeod, the Board voted unanimously to accept the EMS provider activity reports for November and December 2023. Commissioner Benedetto asked if the new ambulance was in service and if it had cut down on the mutual aid calls, Mr. Ganung told him that the extra ambulance was in service, and it had cut down on mutual aid calls, however, you could not predict how many calls could come in at once. Commissioner Benedetto asked why there have been Hartford Healthcare Ambulances in the area, Mr. Ganung told him that they are doing facility transfers to other hospitals, they do not respond to calls in the City.

BUSINESS BY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Cogswell, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by the Volunteer Fire Departments. Drakeville Captain Tomasz Kalinowski provided the Board with an update on the calls, training, and events the department has done. Captain Kalinowski also told the Board that they formed an apparatus replacement committee to replace their truck, he said it would be a few years before the truck would get replaced.

BUSINESS BY DEPARTMENT HEADS

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Cogswell, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by Department Heads. Police Chief Baldwin, Fire Chief Borden, and EMS Manager Jeff Ganung gave the latest updates from their departments.

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 Battle congratulated Firefighter Picz for receiving the Meritorious Service Ribbon, Firefighter Brown on his promotion to Lieutenant, and Officer Morrell for completing his probation.

Commissioner McLeod is thankful that the City and the Police Department worked out a contract, he is happy with what it includes.

Commissioner Cogswell provided the Board with an update on the Policy Subcommittee, which held an organizational meeting tonight. He said that they nominated him as the Chair. The approach of this committee would be to handle one to two policies at a meeting, and then invite any stakeholders to the meetings to discuss the policies. There will be a list of generated policies to be addressed.

Commissioner Benedetto congratulated Firefighter Picz on his recognition and Lieutenant Zavatkay on his retirement. He said that when the Armory was open as a heating center the individuals there were not being respectful of the property, and not staying in the designated areas, to the point where parents and children didn’t feel safe there. Chief Baldwin said that the kitchen area is where they should be and not congregate in the children’s area, if this happens, they can call the Police and they will escort the individuals to the proper area. Commissioner Benedetto mentioned how the staff at the Armory have no way to see who walks in the building, and this is a safety issue. Mayor Carbone told him that there is ARPA funding for security cameras, however, there should be some protection for employees from the public. She went on to say that once the Board of Education redistricts there may be an opportunity to move the offices into another building.

Commissioner McElroy congratulated Firefighters Zavatkay, Picz, and Brown. Also, New Hope Baptist Church wanted to thank Lieutenant Capell and the other firefighters who responded today for an unforeseen water issue.

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Commissioner Young congratulated the Firefighters awarded and promoted, and Officer Morrell for completing his probation.

Mayor Carbone told the Board that she is changing the subcommittees for Police and Fire. Sitting on the Police Subcommittee will be Commissioners Benedetto, Cogswell, and Battle. Sitting on the Fire Subcommittee will be Commissioners Young, McLeod, and McElroy. Mayor Carbone took a moment to thank Chief Baldwin and Deputy Chief Barown for their guidance during union negotiations. She went on to say that the City had to go deep into the taxpayer's pockets, but this contract is getting to where the Police Department should be. The Council approved this contract, and they were willing to entertain more, to make Torrington more attractive to potential applicants.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Cogswell, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:53 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by
Heather Abraham, Asst. City Clerk*

ATTEST:


CAROL L. ANDERSON, CITY CLERK