Norwalk Board of Police Commissioners

Mayor Harry W. Rilling
Commissioner Fran Collier-Clemmons
Commissioner Tony Lopez

CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
November 20, 2023

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Rilling; Commissioner Lopez; Commissioner Collier-Clemmons

STAFF: Chief James Walsh; Deputy Chief Terry Blake; Deputy Chief Melissa Lepore; Deputy Chief Joseph Dinho

OTHERS: Russ Lajoie, Rachel Maley, Maria Jodice, Jody Proct, and Maria Ebner

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 4:29PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES- OCTOBER 16, 2023

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

CIVILIAN AWARD- RUSS LAJOIE, RACHEL MALEY, MARIA JODICE, JODY PROCT, AND MARIA EBNER

Chief Walsh said that on October 22, 2023, a tragic boat accident occurred in the water off Westport, CT. A vessel with five passengers inside fishing for the day capsized due to a wave that overcame their boat forcing all parties in the water.

Several hours later an alert boater Russel Lajoie spotted the parties as he was returning to Norwalk and immediately stopped and was able to gather them onto his boat with the assistance of Molly Mayeux, Maria Jodice, Maria Ebner, Rachel Maley, and Jody Proct. The parties who were suffering from exposure to the cold water were swiftly transported back to the South Norwalk Boat Club and provided warmth in the cabin of Mr. Lajoie's boat. As they were being transported emergency services were contacted and were waiting for them as they arrived at the

boat club. Two missing parties were not rescued that day, one was found deceased several days later, and the other victim is presumed deceased also.
If not for the alert and life-saving efforts of Russ Lajoie, Rachel Maley, Maria Jodice, Jody Proct, and Maria Ebner this entire incident would have been more traffic for the victims they saved that day.

(The commissioners congratulated Russ Lajoie, Rachel Maley, Maria Jodice, Jody Proct, and Maria Ebner)

OCTOBER OFFICER OF THE MONTH- OFFICER DAVID VETARE

Chief Walsh said that the Officer of the Month was awarded to Officer David Vetare for the apprehension of a robbery suspect.

Chief Walsh said that on October 18, 2023, at approximately 12:01 the combined dispatch sent units to the Darien town line due to the fact New York State Police were in pursuit of robbery suspects. Eventually, the suspect's vehicle exited I-95 in Darien and entered Norwalk while still being pursued by the Connecticut State Police and the Darien Police. Before Norwalk Police units arrived on the scene, the suspect vehicle crashed on Ridgewood Road and the operator fled on foot and three other subjects were taken into custody by the Connecticut State Police and Darien Police.

Norwalk police units were assigned to maintain a perimeter and began to search the area for the suspect who fled on foot. Officer Vetare was assigned to respond to Roton School and drove to Crooked Trail so that he could take a position at the rear of the school and as he was approaching the school, he observed a subject matching the suspect's description running towards the school. Officer Vetare chased the wanted suspect on foot as he provided verbal commands to stop running and eventually the suspect heeded Officer Vetare's commands and stopped and surrendered. Officer Vetare was able to take the suspect into custody without incident before other police units arrived to assist.

(The commissioners congratulated Officer Vetare)

PATROL STAFFING (October)

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the patrol staffing for the month of October and said the staffing was at 180 sworn personnel and there are two vacancies in patrol. He said a total of 181 sick days and 96 workers compensation days were used by sworn personnel, and three officers remain on long term workers compensation.

SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT REPORT (October)

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Detective Bureau activity and said that 40 cases were opened in the month of October and noted that a suspect was arrested for stabbing and charged

with assault, risk of injury, and disorderly conduct, they assisted Somerset County NJ Prosecutor's Office with an arrest of a suspect wanted on burglary and sexual assault, and they arrested a suspect for a stolen car, 22 counts of identity theft, and 22 counts of Forgery in the third.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Special Services activity and said they opened 46 cases for the month of October and noted that a search warrant was executed at 4 Elmcrest Terrance and seized crack cocaine, cocaine and fentanyl and an arrest was made, a search warrant was executed at Smoke House Vape Shop for the second time, and a kilo of marijuana was seized and an arrest was made, and five illegal gambling machines and $20,000 was seized from a business at 133 South Main Street.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Special Victims activity and said they opened 71 cases for the month of October and noted that they arrested a suspect via a warrant charging the suspect with sexual assault in the fourth, and they arrested a suspect for two domestic violence failure to appear arrest warrants.

Deputy Chief Blake said that there were 6,986 calls for service and 209 total arrests in October. He said that 844 total citations, summons, and written warnings were issued. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked if there was a special push for citations. Deputy Chief Blake said there was a two-week period of cell phone enforcement as part of the distracted driving grant.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

TRAINING REPORT (OCTOBER)

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Community Police Services Division and said during the month of October they had attended Coffee with a Cop at Dave and Charlie's Hometown Deli. He said the first Faith and Blue weekend was held on October 6th through October 9th and had Coffee with a Cop at three locations, attended a unity walk, six masses of different Houses of Worship, and a closing breakfast at the Norwalk Inn. He said they also attended six sessions of the citizen police academy, the City of Norwalk Touch a Truck event, the gun buyback, three trunk or treat events, and a domestic violence vigil was held at police headquarters.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Traffic Unit and said for October they had conducted 268 motor vehicle stops and conducted major selective enforcement based on the data from the UCONN traffic crash repository as well as resident complaints.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Behavioral Health Unit and said they opened 71 cases in October, addressed 69 cases and closed out 51 cases. He said there were three cases that were referred by outside agencies and 33 cases were received from within the police department.

Deputy Chief Dinho provided an overview of the training for October and said that recertification training was done as well as some additional taser training.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT (OCTOBER)

Deputy Chief Lepore reported and said the distracted driving grant has been completed and the next award date is April 1st through April 30th, 2024. The DOJ award was received for Community Policing Development Solicitation for Chaplain and community members. The goal is to bridge the gaps between the police and the community members who may be more comfortable going to a faith leader instead of the police. The DUI grant hires will be in full force for Thanksgiving weekend and going forward through the remainder of the holiday season, and there will also be grant hires for Washington Street and the shopping centers for the holiday weekend.

Deputy Chief Lepore said that staff inspections for the Marine Unit have been completed, and the Property Unit is scheduled for the end of November and will be a larger inspection due to the amount of property that is stored and possibly the number of high value items.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the Crime Scene Unit and said that 95 persons were fingerprinted (30 were for pistol permits, 24 DVD's were created for case requests, 12 cases were processed for evidence, and 107 patrol cases required camera/photograph downloads. Mayor Rilling asked if there is a fee charged for the case requests. Deputy Chief Lepore said "yes", and the fee is $5.00 per DVD.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the professional standards and accreditation and said that all of the new Tahoe's were upfitted with the dashboard camera system, and 25 new requests were received for case videos. She said that all of the odd body cameras and docking stations have been downloaded, collected, packed, and shipped back to Axon for recycling and/or destruction.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the accreditation and said the October directive changes were completed, approved, and distributed to all personnel electronically and hard copies are made available upon request. She said the third year Accreditation audit is scheduled for the end of February.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT- OFFICER BENJAMIN KOSE

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT OF $2,675.36 FOR OFFICER BENJAMIN KOSE.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT- DEPUTY CHIEF TERRANCE BLAKE
**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT Oof $1,032.50 FOR DEPUTY CHIEF TERRANCE BLAKE.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

BACHELOR'S DEGREE STIPEND- DEPUTY CHIEF TERRANCE BLAKE
**** COMMISSIONER LOPEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE STIPEND FOR DEPUTY CHIEF TERRANCE BLAKE.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

VIOLATION OF AUTHORIZED WRECKER POLICY

Chief Walsh said this item has been rectified but upon an inspection one of the authorized wrecker companies was not fully certified but have now paid all of their repair license fees and are back in compliance. He said there was another matter of overcharging in which they were issued an infraction for so that issue is still pending, and he will notify the commission if there is a finding of guilt. Mayor Rilling asked if they have been put on notice that it is unacceptable and future violations will result in their removal. Chief Walsh said "yes", and their Attorney confirmed that they had received it. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons said that it is disturbing to her that someone that has been given the authority to remove vehicles that have been involved in an accident on the roadway would inflict high charges to a person. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked if he is still to be used. Chief Walsh said "yes" until everything is settled, and he is removed from the list and that would be this commissions authority to remove him or not. He said since the reorganization in January they have tightened the authorized wreckers because some of the information was lacking that was required by the directive and he has tasked an officer to spearhead that plan and has done a great job and now have all of the required paperwork.

COMPLIMENTARY LETTERS

Chief Walsh said he received a complimentary letter from Mary Javis-Smith regarding Sergeant Sherry for his help and kindness when she made a report of fraud.

Chief Walsh said he received a complimentary letter from Mike Vincelli for arranging Officer Rodriguez to instruct the Terrorism Unit class in Spanish. He said it was very important to offer the class to 22 students and they would not have been able to complete tec las without him stepping up to instruct it.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER LOPEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:02PM.
Respectfully submitted, Dilene Byrd