

Norwalk Board of Police Commissioners

Mayor Harry W. Rilling
Commissioner Fran Collier-Clemmons
Commissioner Tony Lopez
Commissioner Nathan Sumpter
Commissioner Ron Paladino

CITY OF NORWALK BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING September 16, 2024

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

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

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 5:39PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES AUGUST 19, 2024

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS
AMENDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments this evening.

AUGUST OFFICER OF THE MONTH- OFFICER PHIL TABORDA AND OFFICER GREEN

Chief Walsh said he is honored to announce that Officer Steven Green and Officer Felipe Taborda have been named August 2024 Officers of the Month. Both officers were recognized for their response in providing lifesaving CPR to a gentleman who had collapsed into cardiac arrest on East Rocks Road on August 21, 2024.

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On that day Officer Felipe Taborda was driving to headquarters when he heard via the radio that a male had collapsed, and civilians were administering CPR. As he was close, he rerouted to assist. Officer Steven Green was also dispatched to the scene. Upon Officer Taborda's arrival, he observed two civilians Gabriel Suarez, and Amelia Angrand a nurse administering CPR. Officer Taborda immediately began chest compressions taking over for the civilians. Officer Green arrived shortly thereafter and assisted with CPR and chest compressions. Due to their lifesaving efforts, the party made a full recovery.

The quick and coordinated efforts of Officers Felipe Taborda, and Officer Steven Green, along with civilians Gabriel Suarez and Amelia Angrand were crucial in saving the life of the gentleman who collapsed. Their teamwork and efforts should be recognized and are commendable. For these selfless reasons, Officer Felipe Taborda, and Officer Steven Green, were named August 2024 Officers of the Month.

(The commissioners congratulated Officer Taborda and Officer Green)

AUGUST OFFICER OF THE MONTH- SERGEANT SAL CALISE, OFFICER DAVID NIEVES, OFFICER CHRIS WASILEWSKI, OFFICER PAUL WARGO, AND OFFICER TAYLOR EQUI

Chief Walsh said he is honored to announce that Norwalk Police Traffic Unit (Officer David Nieves, Officer Chris Wasilewski, Officer Paul Wargo, Officer Taylor Equi, and Commanding Officer Sergeant Sal Calise) have been named August 2024 Officers of the Month. They were named August Officers of the Month for their collective efforts in Traffic Enforcement and Back to School Traffic Safety.

As a unit, these Officers participated in operation "Back to School Slow Down Days". This operation took place the week before the start of school to stress the safety of traffic laws in and around school zones. These officers focused on speeding, stop signs, violations, and aggressive driving. He said he would also like to mention as a Traffic Unit they finished the month of August off with 1,135 traffic stops throughout the City of Norwalk.

Due to their professional, and dedicated work committed to the safety of our school population, they have been named members of the Traffic Unit August 2024 officers of the month for their outstanding hard work and dedication to keeping the City of Norwalk kids safe on our city streets and School zones.

(The commissioners congratulated Sergeant Calise, Officer Nieves, Officer Wasilewski, Officer Wargo, and Officer Equi)

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CIVILIAN AWARD- GABRIEL SUAREZ AND AMELIA ANGRAND

Chief Walsh said the civilians Gabriel Suarez and Amanda Angrand will be recognized with the Civilian Recognition Award but were unable to get in touch with them for this meeting but will recognize them at a meeting at headquarters.

(The commissioners congratulated Gabriel Suarez and Amelia Angrand)

CIVILIAN AWARD- JACK BUTCHER, JOHN KELLY, AND STEVE SHIRREFFS

Chief Walsh said that on Sunday, August 25, 2024, an elderly gentleman parked his vehicle at the Roton Point Club to enjoy the beautiful summer weather. As he was moving the vehicle, he accidentally hit the accelerator pedal instead of the brake pedal forcing his vehicle through the fence and into Long Island Sound. When the vehicle began to sink three civilians sprang into action to enter the water to save the operator. Mr Jack Butcher, Mr. John Kelly, and Mr. Steve Shirreffs did not hesitate to enter the water, swam to the car, and were able to work together to get the door open and remove the gentleman. Norwalk EMS responded along with Fire and Police Rescue who provided care to the gentleman and removed the vehicle which eventually submerged past the windows.

If not for the actions of Mr. Butcher, Mr. Kelly, and Mr Shirreffs in rescuing the gentleman from the car that was rapidly sinking, we would have had a different outcome and a very tragic loss of life. For their heroic lifesaving actions on August 25, 2024, I am recommending a City of Norwalk Civilian Recognition award.

Chief Walsh said that Mr. Butcher and Mr. Kelly were unable to attend today's meeting so he will be scheduling a time for them to come to police headquarters to get their civilian award.

Mr. Shiffes said he was part of the group that assisted the elderly gentleman. He wanted to recognize and thank Mr. Butcher and Mr. Kelly for their efforts and said that he was incredibly impressed by the first responders involved.

(The commissioners congratulated Jack Butcher, John Kelly, and Shirreffs)

PATROL STAFFING (AUGUST)

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the patrol staffing for July and said the staffing was at 181 sworn personnel as of August 31, 2024, and there are two vacancies in patrol. He said 181 sick days were used and 64 workers' compensation days were used by sworn personnel, with three officers on long-term injury, two officers out with non-work-related injuries, and in August two officers were on administrative leave, one officer retired, and one officer remains on administrative leave.

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SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT REPORT (AUGUST)

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Detective Bureau activity and said that 35 cases were opened in August and noted that a suspect was extradited from New York City and charged with burglary in the 3rd, illegally receiving a payment card, and identity theft. A suspect was arrested via warrant for burglary in the 3rd, larceny in the first, and illegal use/possession of a payment card.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Special Services activity and said they opened 39 cases for August and noted that a search warrant was executed at the ZaZa smoke shop, illegal THC products were seized, and one arrest was made. A search warrant was executed at Cocchia's Liquor, and cocaine and gambling machines were seized, two arrests were made, and the state liquor commission has shut them down indefinitely. A suspect who was wanted by Bridgeport Police was located and arrested for kidnapping and other domestic-related charges.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Special Victims activity and said they opened 16 cases for August and noted that a suspect was arrested on a warrant and charged with risk to a minor and assault in the 3rd. An arrest warrant was obtained for a suspect in multiple sexual assaults and a suspect was incarcerated in New York and is working with authorities to extradite that individual to Connecticut. The SROs are back to school and include two newly assigned SROs to that program and they are doing well.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Marine Unit activity and said they had 56 cases for August and noted that 10 people were rescued, three boats were towed, and there were 12 boating violations. There was a capsized boat and four people in severe distress without personal flotation devices were rescued, and there was a car in the water in Rowayton and the Marine Unit assisted the SCUBA team.

Deputy Chief Blake said there were 8,074 calls for service and 199 total arrests in August, and that 2,311 total citations, summons, and written warnings were issued for the month compared to 1,199 from last year and are up to 9,526 stops for the year as compared to a total of 8,152 in 2023, so the productivity has been exceptional.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

TRAINING REPORT (AUGUST)

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Community Police Services Division and said they handled 631 calls for service. He provided an overview of the major events they attended/assisted during August. He said for the eight days of the back-to-school slowdown days there were 722 motor vehicle stops in addition to the other motor vehicle stops for August.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Traffic Unit and said they had conducted 1,134 motor vehicle stops. He said there were 53 selective enforcement locations and some of the

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locations were held on East Avenue, Winfield Street, West Rocks Road, Wilson Avenue, Beach Road, Ely Avenue, North Main Street, Fort Point Street, and Newtown Road.

Deputy Chief Dinho provided an overview of the Behavioral Health Unit and said they opened 47 cases in August, addressed 46 cases, and closed out 27 cases. He said nine cases were referred to by outside agencies, 35 cases were referred from within the police department, and three cases were self-initiated.

Deputy Chief Dinho provided an overview of the training for August and said four total subject areas were attended by 15 officers.

Commissioner Paladino asked if there is any notification of the events that the Community Police Services Division attends because he would like to be a part of those events. Deputy Chief Dinho said he can notify the commissioners, so they are aware of the events.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT (AUGUST)

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the grants and inspections and said that they had 18 DUI grant hires for August for a total of 161 hours worked. She said they conducted 19 field sobriety tests, leading to 19 DUI arrests, officers made 112 car stops, and issued 104 infraction tickets. She said the speed and aggressive driving had 88 grant hires for August for a total of 527 hours, and officers made 734 car stops and issued 672 infraction tickets. She said both the DUI and speed/aggressive driving grants expired the first week of September and will apply for next year's grant upon notice from the state, and they continually monitor funding opportunities through state and federal grants.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the staff inspections and said the special services division inspection is scheduled for the week of September 16th and should have the report by the end of the month.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the Crime Scene Unit and said that 101 persons were fingerprinted (15 were for pistol permits. She said 33 DVD's were created for case requests, 22 cases were processed for evidence, and 93 patrol cases required camera/photograph downloads of scenes, and backgrounds were conducted on two massage therapists both were for the Coco Healthy Spa. She said five solicitor permits were requested during the month for the Limitless Management Company, and two pawnbroker/precious metal permits were requested by Hat City Pawn, LLC. She said the CSI unit did not have any crime scene deployments during August.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the accreditation and said the RFP was completed and submitted for promotional exams for the rank of sergeant and lieutenant, and the written test is tentatively scheduled for the end of February 2025 with the assessment centers scheduled for the first week of March.

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Deputy Chief Lepore said that one additional intern applicant was processed and vetted, and she will begin upon course approval from her school.

Deputy Chief Lepore said the lieutenant is assisting corporation counsel with one investigation that was brought against the City of Norwalk

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the body and dashboard cameras and said there are no issues or malfunctions at this time.

Deputy Chief Lepore said that there were 48 new requests for case videos, 7 disks were burned with videos, and 24 electronic shares with Stamford Court.

Deputy Chief Lepore said the required annual training of all sworn personnel was conducted throughout the month, and the Axon software auto-tagging and performance went live on August 5th and is working well.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the accreditation and said they are currently working on updates and several policies in accordance with state and mandated changes and will be completed and distributed by the end of the month. She said that are continually reviewing the CALEA standards for compliance and the annual audit.

Chief Walsh said the Axon performance system that was onboarded with this year's operating budget and links the NextGen system with the body cam system so when we conduct our bodycam audits, we ensure there is a body cam for every single call for service. Mayor Rilling thanked Chief Walsh and said that would make the police officers and the public safer and make it easier to analyze and look at.

EXECUTIVE SESSION- APPLICANT CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The executive session began at 6:12 PM.

The executive session ended at 7:00 PM.

There were no motions made and no votes were taken.

PERSONNEL MATTERS- VOTE FOR AN APPOINTMENT TO PROBATIONARY OFFICER

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF PROBATIONARY OFFICER TO AMANDA LOPEZ EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 3, 2024, TO THE NORWALK POLICE DEPARTMENT.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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**** COMMISSIONER PALADINO MOVED TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF PROBATIONARY OFFICER PATRICIA NELSON EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 3, 2024, TO THE NORWALK POLICE DEPARTMENT.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT- LIEUTENANT SOFIA GULINO

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR LIEUTENANT SOFIA GULINO IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,362.50.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT- OFFICER MICHAEL MACARI

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR OFFICER MICHAEL MACARI IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,737.50.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Commissioner Sumpter moved the item for discussion

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT- OFFICER BENJAMIN KOSE

Commissioner Lopez asked if the late fees were included in the reimbursement request. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons said they are, but late fees are not reimbursed. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons asked when Officer Kose applied for course approval for these four courses. Chief Walsh said it appears that Officer Kose has not received the course approvals, and this item will need to be tabled until he gets the proper approval.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO REMOVE THE REIMBURSEMENT OF THE LATE FEES AND TO TABLE THE APPLICATION FOR THE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DROP PLAN- OFFICER COREY VENTO

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO THE DROP PLAN FOR OFFICER COREY VENTO BEGINNING ON DECEMBER 1, 2024, AND ENDING ON NOVEMBER 30, 2029.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

COMPLIMENTARY LETTERS

Chief Walsh said that he received a complimentary letter from Lisa and Commissioner Paladino to express their immense gratitude and appreciation for the outstanding services demonstrated by the first responders after finding her husband on the ground after taking a fall from their roof. She said they are profoundly grateful to the first responders for their dedication, sacrifice, and commitment to protecting them and the community. Commissioner Paladino said he couldn't say enough about the first responders; everyone was so professional, and he is grateful to live in Norwalk and have these amazing first responders. He also said the phone call he received the following day from Mayor Rilling speaks to the leader and the person he is as well ask Chief Walsh for having the information regarding the new candidates delivered to him so that he could be part of the hiring process.

Chief Walsh said he received a letter via the CALEA public comment portal stating the Norwalk Police are an exceptional group of men and women and the department has also been helpful when she needed assistance. The representation throughout community events such as the PRIDE event is very important, especially during these times and it makes her feel safe and protected in our town.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd