

Norwalk Board of Police Commissioners

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

CITY OF NORWALK BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING April 15, 2024

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

STAFF: Chief James Walsh; Deputy Chief Terry Blake; Deputy Chief Lepore;
Deputy Chief Dinho; Officer Stephen Cowf; Officer Erwin Reyes

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES- MARCH 18, 2024

On page 4, paragraph 8, change “wad” to “was”

**** COMMISSIONER SUMPTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 18, 2024,
AS AMENDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH TWO IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION-
COMMISSIONER COLLIER CLEMMONS.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

MARCH OFFICER OF THE MONTH- OFFICER STEPHEN COWF & OFFICER ERWIN REYES

Chief Walsh said that on March 31, 2024, during second platoon field training Officer Stephen Cowf, with his recruit trainee Officer Erwin Reyes, were performing proactive patrol in the area of West Cedar Street when they witnessed a vehicle traveling north on West Cedar Street and as the vehicle passed, they observed the operator had an unsecured infant sitting in his lap.

Officer Cowf and Officer Reyes initiated a motor vehicle stop, based on the very dangerous situation of the infant sitting on the driver's lap. During the encounter with the driver, Officer Cowf requested K9 Officer Arvanitakis for a vehicle search based on suspicion that

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developed during the stop. Information was also gathered that the driver, Naud Rodriguez, had a criminal record involving narcotics and firearms.

Officer Arvanitakis Police Service Dog Kato alerted a positive indication for the presence of contraband inside the vehicle. Officer Arvanitakis began to search the vehicle where he discovered a loaded SIG Sauer P365 firearm in a compartment on the driver side kneeboard that was fully accessible to the operator and in the general vicinity of the infant. The operator was prohibited from possessing a firearm. Officers also located a large amount of marijuana that was packaged for sale.

Naud Rodriguez was arrested for numerous firearms charges, narcotics charges, risk of injury to a minor, and motor vehicle charges and held on a \$250,000 bond. Due to the proactive policing and keen observation skills of Officer Stephen Cowf and Officer Erwin Reyes, they averted a very dangerous situation by intervening for the infant's safety. In doing so, they also apprehended an armed individual with a loaded firearm and in possession of a large amount of contraband.

(The commissioners congratulated Officer Cowf and Officer Reyes)

CIVILIAN AWARD- DISPATCHER VANESSA BARRETT

Chief Walsh said on Wednesday, March 7, 2024, at 5:10AM, Norwalk Police Department Telecommunicator Vanessa Barrett, received a 911 call of an unconscious male. She obtained pertinent information from the distraught caller and instated the caller to place the phone closer to the victim's face. She was able to hear the victim's agonal breathing and accurately recognized the dangerous condition and in knowing there was no time to lose, she then instructed the caller on how to perform CPR, and constantly guided the caller until the arrival of emergency response units, who then continued medical care.

Chief Walsh said that Deputy Chief Dinho had reviewed the dispatch recording of the incident and was impressed on how well Telecommunicator Barrett was able to calm the distraught caller, guide the caller on CPR instructions, and continually refocus the caller in what sounded like a chaotic scene based on background noise and commotion.

Chief Walsh said after the incident, the EMS supervisor contacted Dispatcher Supervisor Wrinn and advised him of Telecommunicator Barrett's swift actions saved the victim's life.

Chief Walsh said Telecommunicator Barrett performed her duties with excellence, consistent with her training, and at an elevated standard synonymous with the quality service provided by this agency.

Chief Walsh said that she was recently awarded civilian recognition for her work that day and it was presented today and is recognizing all the telecommunicators as it is Telecommunicator Appreciation Week.

(The commissioners congratulated Dispatcher Vanessa Barrett)

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PATROL STAFFING (MARCH)

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the patrol staffing for the month of March and said the staffing was at 182 sworn personnel and there are no vacancies in patrol. He said a total of 169 sick days and 36 workers compensation days were used by sworn personnel and officers with one officer on a long-term injury.

SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT REPORT (MARCH)

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Detective Bureau activity and said that 33 cases were opened in the month of March and noted that a suspect was arrested and charged with criminal possession of armor, criminal possession of a controlled substance, criminal possession of ammunition, attempt of bomb manufacturing, possession of fireworks, and possession of a silencer and was an older case and the individual has been in jail since then the original investigation that dated back several months ago, but recently served this warrant. He said a suspect was also arrested via a warrant for robbery in the first.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Special Services activity and said they opened 44 cases for the month of March and noted that there was a search warrant executed at Extended Stay America for a suspect arrested on narcotics charges. He said that a search warrant was also executed at the Smoke House and the suspect was arrested for selling marijuana from this location. Mayor Rilling said this has happened numerous times and asked if the public nuisance statute would apply. Deputy Chief Blake said the investigators have met with the State's Attorney's Office in that regard as well as the property owner who is not the individual on the lease and are working towards putting an end to this particular establishment and the businesses that are being conducted there.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Special Victims activity and said they opened 70 cases for the month of March which a majority were related to school resource officers and noted that a suspect was arrested via a warrant for sexual assault in the first and risk of injury to a minor. He said the Public Safety Cadets continue to meet weekly and the DARE instruction is ongoing.

Deputy Chief Blake said that 651 total citations, summons, and written warnings were issued for the month and is a substantial increase from last year and will continue to be proactive with the motor vehicle enforcement in the city. He said there were 6,096 calls for service, and 420 total arrests in March that included an individual who had 100 plus counts of credit card and identity theft.

Commissioner Collier-Clemmons said in February there were 260 events of traveling too fast and asked if that was due to a grant. Deputy Chief Blake said there was an uptick in availability to conduct speed enforcement and multiple elongated shifts to do that, so the traffic officers really focused their efforts on speeding and lowering speeds throughout the city.

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COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

TRAINING REPORT (MARCH)

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Community Police Services Division and said the major events during the month of March that they had attended included the St. Patrick's Day Parade, assisting at the Stamford St. Patrick's Day Parade, Chinese New Year Event celebration at the library, Rowayton Elementary School lunch, Carver Center chess event, SONO Beer Garden race escort, commercial truck enforcement with the CT DMV, Boy Scouts science class, Norwalk Easter Egg Hunt, and the World Alive Church Easter Egg Hunt.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Traffic Unit and said they had conducted 487 motor vehicle stops and there were 101 major selective enforcement locations and the major selective enforcement locations were held on Main Avenue @ West Rocks Road, East Avenue, Winfield Street, Fox Run Road, Soundview @ Cliff Street and Grist Mill Road, Calf Pasture Beach Road, and West Norwalk Road.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Behavioral Health Unit and said they opened 54 cases in March, addressed 53 cases and closed out 43 cases. He said one case was referred to by outside agencies, 38 cases were received from within the police department, and 15 cases were self-initiated.

Deputy Chief Dinho provided an overview of the training for March and said the training division held 11 classes and 33 officers were trained.

Deputy Chief Dinho said over the weekend the Traffic Unit and Community Policing focused on unnecessary noise and load muffler violations and so far, this month has had 19 infractions. He said at the request of Chief Walsh they have also been focusing on juveniles riding bicycles in the middle of the street in a dangerous fashion and over the weekend had made one stop and issued a juvenile summons and the bicycle was taken for safekeeping and had another one today. He said over the weekend the Community Police Officers were able to speak with a group of juveniles that were not in the street but saw them gathered and spoke to them about the dangers of riding bicycles the way that some juveniles do in the streets and aside from the risk of injury also being issued a juvenile summons and having their bicycle temporarily ceased.

Commissioner Collier-Clemmons said the stop signs that have been placed at all four-way intersection on Soundview Avenue @ Cliff Street in conjunction with the Traffic Authority has done a tremendous job in reducing the number of accidents and has made it easier to get through the intersection without fear.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

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Deputy Chief Lepore reported and said with the retirement of LT. Roncinske and the promotion of LT. Orr, training and transition took place with all position responsibilities.

This included a 30-hr. training course with Daigle Law group for internal affairs. A separate training was held for grant scheduling and reporting requirements to include state and federal website understanding as well as for NPD staff inspections and all pertinent information and position requirements. She said there were six DUI grant hires for the month to combine with patrol for 15 DUI arrests. The JAG high visibility grant hires for March focused on St. Patrick's Day weekend and the pub crawl on the night before and then the 17th celebration. The safe neighborhoods grant application is still pending and is awaiting notification.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the staff inspections and said there were no inspections conducted in the month of March, but the combined dispatch will be inspected during the month of April and the NPD annual report was completed and posted on the city's website.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the Crime Scene Unit and said that 118 persons were fingerprinted (54 were for pistol permits. She said 22 DVD's were created for case requests, 7 cases were processed for evidence, and 111 patrol cases required camera/photograph downloads, and eight solicitor permits were issued.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the professional standards and accreditation and said the state rolled out the new bail interview notification procedures as part of going all digital and are still awaiting on the evidence submission phase.

Deputy Chief Lepore said the Powertime software training and utilization is in progress for all patrol supervisors. Both supervisors and officers will be utilizing this website and app to access assigned posts, vacation/sick time, and hiring for shift work. She said the software will run parallel with paper process until the end of the month in hopes of going all digital by May 1, 2024.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the body and dashboard cameras and said one body camera was returned to Axon for repair. There were 29 new requests for case videos, and 4 disks were burned with videos. The Axon trial agreement contract review was completed by Corporation Counsel and submitted back to Axon's legal office with the change requirements and is awaiting finalization.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the accreditation and said the CALEA second year inspection was conducted and included approximately 120 files reviewed online via Power DMS software system. The four critical areas of performance interviews were conducted via zoom with respective supervisors and/or officers. The interview topics included K9 unit, BHU/mental illness, and the property and traffic divisions. There were minor corrections made to 24 files and all files passed the inspection except two standards that were left in progress for review in year three in which they will be writing a new directive on as it is a new policy.

Commissioner Lopez asked that the safe neighborhoods grant application that is still pending be elaborated on. Deputy Chief Lepore said the application was submitted and they have

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come back with some follow up questions and have provided all the information and are now just waiting to hear back from them.

Commissioner Lopez asked what the safe neighborhoods grant will be used for. Deputy Chief Lepore said it will provide them with LPR readers that will be stationed in certain areas of the city and these readers will be in conjunction with other cities in the Fairfield County area to combine the investigative efforts.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

BACHELOR'S DEGREE STIPEND- OFFICER STEVEN GREEN

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE STIPEND FOR OFFICER STEVEN GREEN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT-SERGEANT NATHANIEL PAULINO

**** COMMISSIONER SUMPTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,205 FOR SERGEANT NATHANIEL PAULINO.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

COURSE APPROVAL- OFFICER MICHAEL MACARI

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE COURSE APPROVAL FOR OFFICER MICHAEL MACARI.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

COMPLIMENTARY LETTERS

Chief Walsh said he received a complimentary letter from the Family Care Visiting Nurse Agency regarding Officer Ryan Evarts for putting on an excellent safety presentation for their nurses and for adding an additional layer of support and preparedness for their nurses.

Commissioner Collier-Clemmons thanked Chief Walsh for sending the commission the 2023 annual report and it was excellently done.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER SUMPTER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:08PM. Respectfully submitted, Dilene Bryd