

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 March 18, 2024

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Rilling; Commissioner Lopez; Commissioner Sumpter

STAFF: Chief James Walsh; Deputy Chief Terry Blake

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 4:51PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES- FEBRUARY 26, 2024

**** COMMISSIONER SUMPTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 26, 2024, AS SUBMITTED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

FEBRUARY OFFICER OF THE MONTH- OFFICER RICHARD HOLMES

Chief Walsh said the Officer of the Month for February 2024 is Officer Richard Holmes. He said Officer Holmes was nominated by LT. Marc Lepore for his significant arrests in February 2024.

Chief Walsh said that Officer Holmes is currently assigned to the Special Services Division and is the Taskforce Officer for the United States Marshal Service.

During the month of February Officer Holmes and his team made several high-profile/high risk arrests, both for fugitives and violent felony warrants. These arrests require significant investigation and/or surveillance to determine the location of the wanted persons. While specific cases are assigned to a task force member, the entire team participates in the investigation/planning of the arrest. All cases assigned to the USMS Task Force are violent felonies, crimes against children, or violent sexual assaults. Officer Holmes was the assigned case officer for each of the following significant arrests. Due to his diligent and professional investigations, he was able to locate these wanted felons and arrest them.

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On February 6, 2024, the fugitive apprehension of Tyjaha Watson occurred in Waterbury, CT. Watson had a Waterbury arrest warrant for murder and a DEA warrant from West Virginia for federal drug charges and an illegal firearm was located inside the residence.

On February 7, 2024, fugitives Anthony Alvarado and Edwin Delacruz were arrested in Bridgeport, CT. Both had attempted murder warrants from New York stemming from incidents in 2022 and 2024.

On February 15, 2024, fugitive apprehension of Bryon Williams and Benjamin Villanueva in Hartford, CT. Williams had a Hartford arrest warrant for homicide, and Villanueva had a warrant from Pennsylvania for violation of parole and a pending homicide charge for a shooting outside of a Pennsylvania bar.

On February 9, 2024, fugitive apprehension of Escolastico Gonzalez-Velazquez and Teron McCary in New Britain and Bristol, CT. Gonzales-Velazquez had an arrest warrant for a homicide out of Puerto Rico. McCary had an arrest warrant out of Waterbury for murder. These four cases highlight Officer Holmes's excellent work in February. In addition to his responsibilities with the Marshal service, Officer Holmes assisted the Special Services division with their daily workload. Officer Holmes went above and beyond the call of duty in February and his dedication, resourcefulness, and determination assisted in the removal of dangerous individuals from the streets of Connecticut.

Mayor Rilling said on behalf of the commission and the citizens of Norwalk they commend Officer Holmes and requested that be acknowledged to Officer Holmes in a form of a memo.

(The commissioners congratulated Officer Holmes)

PATROL STAFFING (FEBRUARY)

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the patrol staffing for the month of February and said the staffing was at 178 sworn personnel and there are four vacancies in patrol. He said a total of 166 sick days and 18 workers compensation days were used by sworn personnel and officers on partial returns.

SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT REPORT (FEBRUARY)

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Detective Bureau activity and said that 44 cases were opened in the month of February and noted that a suspect was arrested by warrant for six counts of non-compliance for the sex offender registry, and a juvenile was arrested for robbery.

Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Special Services activity and said they opened 55 cases for the month of February and noted that there were numerous felony arrests of suspects with warrants which all involved investigations and surveillance. He said there were no liquor complaints and there were no overdoses for the month.

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Deputy Chief Blake reported on the Special Victims activity and said they opened 53 cases for the month of February and noted that the Norwalk Public Schools were on winter break the week of February 19th and that Sergeant Paulino is assisting with several computer/internet-based investigations within the division.

Deputy Chief Blake said there were 5,373 calls for service, and 124 total arrests in February, and that 883 total citations, summons, and written warnings were issued for the month and compared to February 2023 there was a substantial uptick in enforcement and proactivity which helped to lower the number of motor vehicle accidents in the city.

Mayor Rilling said a few weeks ago on a Sunday he and his wife went to the beach and some of the obnoxious noises that were being made by people riding on motorcycles was very disturbing and he is hoping the police officers will start taking some enforcement efforts.

Commissioner Lopez asked how the statistics for the decreased motor vehicle accidents are gauged. Deputy Chief Blake said the Connecticut Crash Repository is used which provides real time data.

Commissioner Sumpter said one of the things they have seen with the warmer weather is dirt bikes traveling on the streets and asked how the citizens can help to identify them. Deputy Chief Blake said when anyone calls in a motor vehicle complaint the dispatcher takes all the information, and an officer is assigned to investigate it.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

TRAINING REPORT (FEBRUARY)

Chief Walsh reported on the Community Police Services Division and said the major events during the month of February included the South Norwalk Food Bank, the DMV-Commercial truck enforcement joint operation, a community lunch at Tracey School, a Touch-a-Truck event at Stepping Stones Museum, the Black History Month celebration at the SONO Library, and the “Bill of Rights” learning session with students and police at Police Headquarters.

Chief Walsh reported on the Traffic Unit and said they had conducted 487 motor vehicle stops. He said the major selective enforcement locations were held on East Avenue, Winfield Street, Strawberry Hill, Westport Avenue, West Rocks Road, Grist Mill Road, Rowayton Avenue, and Dr. Martin Luther King Drive.

Chief Walsh reported on the Behavioral Health Unit and said they opened 34 cases in February, addressed 31 cases and closed out 24 cases. He said six cases were referred to by outside agencies, 16 cases were received from within the police department, and 12 cases were self-initiated.

Chief Walsh provided an overview of the training for February and said there were 20 various training classes conducted.

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ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT (FEBRUARY)

Chief Walsh reported and said the DUI grant had two hires on Friday and Saturday nights throughout the month of February and made 9 DUI arrests for the month. He said they also had JAG hires for high visibility areas, so officers were hired for Friday and Saturday nights throughout the month of February.

Chief Walsh said the safe neighborhood grant application is still pending and is awaiting award notification on that.

Chief Walsh reported on the staff inspections and said the next inspection is scheduled for April which will be for combined dispatch. He said the NPD annual report is in the process of being proofread and finalized.

Chief Walsh reported on the Crime Scene Unit and said that 126 persons were fingerprinted (57 were for pistol permits. He said 18 DVD's were created for case requests, 5 cases were processed for evidence, and 96 patrol cases required camera/photograph downloads, and eight solicitor permits were issued.

Chief Walsh reported on the professional standards and accreditation and said that the Detective Bureau promotional exam has been completed and the list is in place until February 27, 2026. He said there is no news on the state rollout of the digital evidence management system.

Chief Walsh said the Powertime scheduling software is beginning to be implemented. This entails the automation of the entire scheduling system for the patrol division and combined dispatch. The supervisors and officers will be utilizing this website and app to access assigned posts, vacation/sick time, and hiring for shift work.

Chief Walsh reported on the body and dashboard cameras and said two cameras were returned to Axon for repair. There were 29 new requests for case videos, and 16 disks were burned with videos. The Common Council has approved the increased price for records request to \$30/hr of video. The Axon trial agreement contract was submitted to the Corporation Counsel for review which is for the auto tagging and performance software to be utilized in the auditing of body and dash camera videos. He said this will provide greater access to provide audits of when the officers use the body cameras and will make the two systems much more efficient.

Chief Walsh reported on the accreditation and said the CALEA yearly inspection was conducted last week which included approximately 100 standards (files) online via the Power DMS system as well as four zoom interviews with respective supervisors and/or officers. The interview topics included the K-9 unit, BHU/Mental Illness, and the property and traffic division.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

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Chief Walsh said he is proposing the promotions of Sergeant David Orr to the rank of Lieutenant, Detective David Geismar to the rank of Sergeant, and Officer Akeem Bryce, and Officer Julio Rodriguez to the rank of Detective.

**** COMMISSIONER LOPEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROMOTION OF SERGEANT DAVID ORR TO THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT TO BE EFFECTIVE ON APRIL 4, 2024.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COMMISSIONER SUMPTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROMOTION OF DETECTIVE DAVID GEISMAR TO THE RANK OF SERGEANT TO BE EFFECTIVE ON APRIL 4, 2024.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COMMISSIONER SUMPTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROMOTION OF OFFICER AKEEM BRYCE TO THE RANK OF DETECTIVE TO BE EFFECTIVE ON APRIL 4, 2024.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COMMISSIONER LOPEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROMOTION OF OFFICER JULIO RODRIGUEZ TO THE RANK OF DETECTIVE TO BE EFFECTIVE ON APRIL 4, 2024.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

(The commissioners congratulated the officers on their promotions)

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

COMPLIMENTARY LETTERS

Chief Walsh said he received a complimentary letter from Mr. Mahoney regarding Officer Boyd for locating his missing wallet. Mr. Mahoney stated that an honest couple and a resourceful police officer turned a harrowing evening into a grateful one, and that he had asked Officer Boyd if he could make a donation in his name to the police department or an affiliated organization and he declined the offer and stated he was just doing his job, but from his perspective he did more than his job. He said that his initiative and resourcefulness helped him to avoid a very stressful stay in Norwalk and he is grateful for Officer Boyd's actions and believes that he should be commended for going beyond the call of duty.

Chief Walsh said he received a complimentary letter from Mrs. Eileen Swerdlick regarding Officer Taborda. She said that she was involved in a motor vehicle accident where her vehicle had struck the front of a store on Main Avenue and Officer Taborda was in the area and responded to the scene and provided aid and comfort to her, and Officer Taborda's professionalism and compassion left an indelible impression on her.

(The commissioners congratulated Officer Boyd and Officer Taborda)

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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The meeting adjourned at 5:24PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd