

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 February 26, 2024

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

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

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 5:26PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES- JANUARY 22, 2024

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF
JANUARY 22, 2024, AS SUBMITTED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

JANUARY OFFICERS OF THE MONTH- SERGEANT RAMON TEJADA AND SERGEANT JOSE SILVA

Chief Walsh said on January 28, 2024, at approximately 3:00AM, Connecticut State Police Troop G Dispatch reported that troopers were attempting to stop a wrong-way driver on the Merritt Parkway traveling northbound in the southbound lanes at a high rate of speed. Troop G Dispatch advised that the vehicle in question was currently in New Canaan and was traveling towards Norwalk and assistance was requested from Norwalk Police.

Sergeant Silva and Sergeant Tejada along with patrol units responded immediately to Main Avenue where the Merritt Parkway is accessible from multiple on and off ramps. Sergeant Silva and Sergeant Tejada then had Norwalk Police dispatch advise Troop G Dispatch that he

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was equipped with “stop sticks” and could deploy them in an attempt to stop the wrong-way vehicle. Subsequently, with appropriate cover tactics, Sergeant Tejada deployed the “stop sticks” near exit 39 in the southbound left travel lane. The wrong way vehicle the “stop sticks”, which deflated the driver’s side front tire. The vehicle then slowed down and made a left turn onto the off-ramp of exit 40 A, where it then ceased movement due to the deflation. The operator of the vehicle was then taken into custody without incident by the Connecticut State Police for DUI charges.

Chief Walsh said both Sergeant Silva and Sergeant Tejada should be commended for the actions taken regarding the incident as their swift response and deployment of the “stop sticks” resulted in a reckless and dangerous motorist being taken off the road with no injuries and minimal damage to the suspect vehicle. Should the vehicle have been allowed to continue to travel, innocent motorists would have continued to have been put in immense danger. Based on their swift, and professional actions he named both Sergeant Silva and Sergeant Tejada for Officers of the Month for January 2024.

Chief Walsh said that both Sergeant Tejada and Sergeant Silva were both recently promoted to sergeant and are doing a wonderful job.

(The commissioners congratulated Sergeant Tejada and Sergeant Silva)

PATROL STAFFING (January)

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the patrol staffing for the month of January and said the staffing was at 180 sworn personnel and there are two vacancies in patrol. She said a total of 163.75 sick days and 39 workers compensation days were used by sworn personnel which is from one officer who is on a partial return.

SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT REPORT (January)

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the Detective Bureau activity and said that 38 cases were opened in the month of January and noted that a suspect in an evading fatality was arrested and charged with Manslaughter two and evading, and a suspect was charged with carrying a pistol without a permit.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the Special Services activity and said they opened 34 cases for the month of January and noted that they had recovered a .22 caliber sawed off rifle which was hidden on Lexington Avenue, and there were several felony arrests of suspects with warrants for narcotics, firearms, and FTA charges.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the Special Victims activity and said they opened 63 cases for the month of January and noted that they had assisted CSP and NJ Prosecutors Office with serving an arrest warrant for a subject charged with fugitive from justice and child pornography who was located in Norwalk.

Deputy Chief Lepore said there were 6,217 calls for service, and 174 total arrests in January, and that 879 total citations, summons, and written warnings were issued for the month.

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Commissioner Lopez asked how people obtain firearms without a permit. Deputy Chief Lepore said she does not know the details of this particular case. Chief Walsh said that every firearm they recover gets a full ATF trace and gets sent to the lab for several diagnostic tests to see if it has been used in other crimes. Commissioner Lopez asked if there have been any trends seen. Chief Walsh said in his experience it varies and some are stolen and firearms in the northeast are sometimes “straw” purchases from down south which is when someone purchases a gun under false pretense and is a significant issue in illegal firearms trafficking.

Commissioner Lopez asked if there is a reason for the increase in infractions from last January to this January. Chief Walsh said he thinks it’s a combination of the reorganization of the Police Department since January 2023, as well as the manpower increases as well as the ability to staff traffic units, and have hired a lot of officers in the past year and a lot have been promoted into new positions so there is some new leadership in different divisions within the traffic unit and community policing as well as in the patrol division.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

TRAINING REPORT (JANUARY)

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Community Police Services Division and said the major events during the month of January included Three Kings Day at St. Joseph’s Church, a Martin Luther King breakfast, and community outreach at The Marvin. He said they also participated in the commercial truck enforcement with the DMV Police and motor vehicle “street takeover” safety patrol.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Traffic Unit and said for January they had conducted 545 motor vehicle stops. He said for the major selective enforcement locations were held on East Avenue, Winfield Street, Connecticut Avenue, Strawberry Hill, Cranbury Road, Wilson Avenue, and Nursery Street and the locations are based on the data from the UCONN crash data repository as well as resident complaints.

Deputy Chief Dinho reported on the Behavioral Health Unit and said they opened 56 cases in January, addressed 45 cases and closed out 33 cases. He said two cases were referred to by outside agencies, 38 cases were received from within the police department, and 16 cases were self-initiated.

Deputy Chief Dinho provided an overview of the training report for January and said various training courses were conducted and attended by many of the police officers. Commissioner Sumpter asked if there is a program in Norwalk where a social worker would be called rather than the police or a combination of both. Deputy Chief Dinho said the social workers will sometimes do follow-ups’ but they like to make sure they are escorted with a police officer for their safety.

Commissioner Sumpter asked if there are reports with regards to arrests etc. that are separated by race or minorities because he had read, they are doing that at the state level. Deputy Chief Dinho said there are statics that are compiled at the Police Department. Chief Walsh said

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that CALEA which is the Commission on Law Enforcement Accreditation requires they do annual reports, so he just completed the 2023 use of force and arrest report which is quite extensive and breaks the information down by every variable for each encounter they have as an organization. Commissioner Sumpter asked if that is available to the public. Chief Walsh said it is used for internal reviews and provided to CALEA and is a public document that can be requested through FOI. Commissioner Sumpter asked if it is available to the commissioners. Chief Walsh said “yes”, and he will forward it to him.

Commissioner Sumpter asked how the police officers keep up on the training. Deputy Chief Dinho said the State of Connecticut through the Police Academy requires that every officer in the state receives a certain number of minimum hours of mandated training that is on a continuous basis, and they have three years to complete the training and the State of Connecticut Police Academy will reissue the recertification, so they are in a constant training cycle. He said that every officer is on a three-year training cycle and is staggered so that everyone does not expire at the same time. He said the training includes all updates that come from the state and from the police academy and is a very comprehensive training program.

Commissioner Collier-Clemmons thanked Deputy Chief Dinho for the report form and said that it is so helpful and concise, and she likes the additions of identifying if it is a Norwalk police officer or from a neighboring police force.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT (JANUARY)

Deputy Chief Lepore reported and said the DUI grant had two hires on Friday and Saturday nights throughout the month of January and made 16 DUI arrests for the month. She said they also had JAG hires for high visibility area, so two officers were hired for Friday and Saturday nights throughout the month of January.

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

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the staff inspections and said the next inspection is scheduled for April which will be for combined dispatch. She said the NPD annual report is still being compiled and organized.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the Crime Scene Unit and said that 119 persons were fingerprinted (48 were for pistol permits. She said 66 DVD's were created for case requests, 27 cases were processed for evidence, and 106 patrol cases required camera/photograph downloads.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the professional standards and accreditation and said that the Detective Bureau written test was held on February 17th and 13 officers took the test and 10 had passed. The Assessment Center was given today and should have a promotion list by the end of the week. She said they are still waiting for the state for the roll out of the digital evidence management system.

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Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the body and dashboard cameras and said there have been no issues, and that ten kits are stocked and ready for installation of the next set of cars, and there have been 26 new requests for case videos.

Deputy Chief Lepore reported on the accreditation and said the CALEA yearly inspection is scheduled for the last week of February and will be conducted online via the Power DMS system. She said they are compiling the year-end reporting requirements for CALEA and assisting in the collection of paperwork for the NPD Annual Report.

Commissioner Lopez asked when the ten kits are anticipated to be installed. Deputy Chief Lepore said the cars will be delivered at the end of March and they will be installed the first week of April.

Mayor Rilling asked Deputy Chief Lepore to provide an overview of the CALEA process for Commissioner Sumpter. Deputy Chief Lepore provided an overview of CALEA and said it is the national level of law enforcement officers who are held to a high standard for CALEA. She said it was never mandatory before but the Chief at the time recommended that it be done because he wanted to be sure the department was very professional and has been an accredited agency since 1995. She said they are audited each year and are assigned a manager that will audit their records and have to show proof that they are actually doing what they say is being done and there are 483 files and points that they need to hit each year, and they are not only nationally accredited but are state accredited for Connecticut as well.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

(4) TUITION REIMBURSEMENTS- LIEUTENANT SOFIA GULINO

Mayor Rilling noted that Lieutenant Gulino is carrying a 4.0 GPA and gives her a lot of credit. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons agreed and said she thinks it's phenomenal especially with all that she does for the department. Commissioner Lopez and Commissioner Sumpter agreed.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT-FOR LIEUTENANT SOFIA GULINO IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,322.50.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

COMPLIMENTARY LETTERS

Chief Walsh said he received a complimentary letter regarding Officer Prada. He said she was working a job on Wall Street during the past snowstorm and a gentleman had stopped and advised her that the sidewalk had ice and snow on it, and it was dangerous for people to walk on and she listed to his concern and reached out to city departments. He said his wife came back later that day and found the sidewalk cleared and he and his family thanked Officer Prada, and all involved that took quick action to make that happen.

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Chief Walsh said he received a complimentary letter regarding Officer Bardos who is one of the newer officers for helping a women find her purse that she misplaced while shopping at Costco. They could not say enough about the concern and effort that was put into this investigation and having been a Lieutenant with the Greenwich Police Department and retiring after 31 years of service hopes he has a long and rewarding career with the Norwalk Police Department.

Commissioner Sumpter said there is a lot more going on in the Police Department than he could have imagined, and he is pleased to be a part of this commission and thanked all of the officers and the chiefs for all that they do. Commissioner Lopez agreed and said the officers play a pivotal role in their image and it is not just about “going after the bad guys” and the community embraces such attitudes of looking after people’s needs. Commissioner Collier-Clemmons also agreed and said she had lost her phone at Shop Rite, and she had called the police and that officer that had responded had just been sworn in and traced the phone and was able to retrieve it and returned it to her in less than three hours and she was very thankful.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd