

Norwalk Board of Police Commissioners

Mayor Harry W. Rilling
Commissioner Fran Collier-Clemmons
Commissioner Kelly Straniti

CITY OF NORWALK BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING February 22, 2021

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Harry Rilling; Commissioner Collier-Clemmons; Commissioner Straniti

STAFF: Chief Thomas Kulhawik; Deputy Chief Susan Zecca; Deputy Chief James Walsh

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 4:32PM. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JANUARY 25, 2021.

On page 3, paragraph two, line five change "this" to "these"

On page 3, paragraph three, line eight change "has" to "have" and "an" to "and"

On page 4, paragraph two, line seven change "since" to "seen" and on line eight change "there" to "that"

On page 7, under the informational items change, paragraph two, line three "change "he" to "the"

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 25, 2021 AS AMENDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

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RECOGNITION

January Officer of the Month: Officer Russell Ouellette

Chief Kulhawik said that Officer Ouellette is assigned to community policing and is assigned to the West Avenue corridor which includes the SONO Collection Mall, and he has taken it upon himself to immerse himself in that area especially with issues at the mall to the point when he returns from off days he checks the incident log to see if anything had occurred. He said that he had noticed an assault case had been reported when he was off duty where two arrests were made and he had reviewed the case and had noticed there was a third person that was not identified or arrested. He took it upon himself to contact the mall and review the surveillance video and had identified the person and obtained a confession and made an arrest of the third person involved in the assault.

(The commissioners offered officer Ouellette congratulations)

OPERATIONS REPORT

Patrol Staffing

Deputy Chief Walsh reported and said for the month of January there were currently 176 sworn personnel and probationary officers Alvarez and Russo were sworn in on January 5, 2021. He also said that there are five patrolmen vacancies and Officer Brent Crawford is still on a leave of absence. He said the sworn personnel used 150.25 sick days, 73 workers compensations days and three officers are on extended workmen's compensation which accounted for most of the days used in that month.

Deputy Chief Walsh said Detective Bureau opened 31 cases in the month of January but there is nothing significant to report.

Deputy Chief Walsh said that Special Services opened 39 cases in the month of January and continue their enforcement on underage vape sales throughout the city which was started in December and they have been doing a great job. He said they also assisted the federal authorities in following up on several leads regarding the incident in Washington on January 6, 2021. They also assisted the FBI in an arrest of a Norwalk resident on RICO indictment.

Deputy Chief Walsh said the Special Victims Unit remained busy with 33 open cases and had resolved a 17 year old run away who took the family car and was located in Pennsylvania, and they also continued with several other investigations within the unit.

Deputy Chief Walsh said there was a change in command with the Traffic Unit and Lt. Dinho and Sergeant Calise along with Officers Gonzalez and Lovallo were transferred there effective January 1, 2021, and the enforcement has definitely increased and for the month of January there were 317 infractions issued compared to 79 in the previous month. He said they were

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concentrating on speeding in the high complaint areas such as East Rocks and West Rocks Roads and East Avenue. He said they also did a lot of intersections for stop signs. He said they also did an inventory of the speed trailers and speed signs and did some repairs so there are more of those out in the community to slow traffic down and are recording that data.

Deputy Chief Walsh said the total criminal arrests for January were 167 and the calls for service for the total division was 4,639, and there were 317 total infractions for the month with traveling too fast being the number one with 79 infractions issued throughout the city.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Training Report- January

Deputy Chief Zecca reported and said January was relatively light for training but had the monthly specialized teams training and ESC Training etc. She said they are finishing the remainder of the firearms training and qualifications. She said of note we were able to get a few of the sergeants into the CIT class which is the Crisis Intervention Training and are trying to get all patrol certified.

Chief Kulhawik said over the past several weeks we have interviewed the last of the entry level candidates and had made several offers and are now waiting for their background checks to be completed. He said we also interviewed a number of lateral candidates and have made conditional offers to several of them.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

Master's Degree Stipend- Officer Edgar Gonzalez

Chief Kulhawik said that Officer Gonzalez has successfully completed his Master's with a 4.0 average from Sacred Heart University and he is requesting the tuition stipend be added to his pay.

Mayor Rilling asked if a copy of his diploma has been received to accompany his transcripts.

Chief Kulhawik said "no" but that he can obtain a copy.

****COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE
MASTER'S DEGREE STIPEND FOR OFFICER EDGAR GONZALEZ CONTINGENT
ON RECEIVING A COPY OF HIS DIPLOMA.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

(The commissioners offered Officer Gonzalez congratulations)

Tuition Reimbursement- Detective Brendan Collins

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**** COMMISSIONER STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE THE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR DETECTIVE BRENDAN COLLINS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,447.50.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Complimentary Letters

Chief Kulhawik said he received a complimentary letter from the Carver Center to Officer Delgado regarding the toy drive. He said that he had dropped off a number of toys to the Carver Center and they had send a letter for him going above and beyond.

Chief Kulhawik said he received a complimentary email from a Norwalk resident stating that she observed Officer Suda removing a bag of garbage that was in the roadway and wanted to acknowledge that he went out of his way to do that.

Chief Kulhawik said he received a complimentary email from a Norwalk resident regarding an individual that needed medication during a snow storm and was feeling sick and frightened and they had called the Fire Department but Lieutenant Blake was working in dispatch at the time and he had dispatched Officer Sefcik to pick up the prescription and deliver it to her and she was very thankful.

Chief Kulhawik said he received a complimentary email thanking Officer Wasilewski for installing a car seat.

Chief Kulhawik said he received a complimentary email from the Norwalk EMS Director regarding an emotionally disturbed person call on South Main Street and had commented on Officers Ortiz, Ham, Silva, Gay and Mitchell as well as Sergeant Sherry for the excellent job they had done de-escalating the situation and the situation was resolved without any major issues.

(The commissioners offered their thanks and congratulations)

Presentation on Department Training

Deputy Chief Zecca presented and said all of the officer are certified by POST (Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Council) and attend the academy which is 25-26 weeks and the curriculum is 1340 hours at a minimum and is currently being held by a combination of virtual and in person. Once they complete the academy they have a ten week field training where they are assigned to three different field trainers and are rotated through three shifts. Once they are certified all officers complete training annually and the officers are recertified every three years and the review credit training is a minimum of 60 credit hours. In addition to what is required for them to recertify we do a variety of specialized training for some not all of the

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officers. Recently with the change in the noise ordinance we have 12 officers trained on the new noise meter to be able to properly investigate and enforce that ordinance. The detectives get specialized training based on what their “nitch” may be. The specialty teams are trained on a monthly basis so they are always ready to react in an emergency.

Deputy Chief Zecca said that some of the larger initiatives that are done that are outside of the mandated training include Crisis Intervention Team training and that is to recognize and respond to behavioral health conditions and trauma. The goal is to have the entire department trained and there are currently 67 member’s trained. She said another training is Fair and Impartial Policing and in 2015-2016 we had trained the entire department and had brought an outside instructor in, and new officers receive the training in the academy. We have officers trained in this so we recently just sent them for a refresher and recertification class to be able to teach a refresher class and plan to start that this year. She said that Crowd Control training was offered in 2017 and all of the officers were trained and was a combination of practical and classroom skills to safely manage unlawful gatherings, and we are hoping to provide it to all of the officers in the upcoming year.

Deputy Chief Zecca said that as part of the review training there is an in-house person that is trained in de-escalation and we do the training in all of our review cycles. In 2015 we had brought in retired LT. Kevin Dillion who is much respected and he had trained over half of the department in L.E.A.D.S. de-escalating training and it was very well received. There are 72 officers who have not yet received the training at the time but are hoping to get him back in next month the provide the full class to those officers, along with a half day refresher for the officers who had previously received the training.

Deputy Chief Zecca said that we have been doing more and more over the years to properly train our supervisors, and in 2019 we had everyone take the FEMA Incident Command and National Incident Management classes and had send many of the Lieutenants to the FBI LEEDS training and currently have sent a few sergeants and are looking to send a few more to the FBI Supervisory Leadership Institute. Additionally, in 2020, Attorney Eric Daigle was brought in to provide supervisory training for lieutenants and sergeants.

Deputy Chief Zecca said that over the past few years we have been renting a mobile simulation firearms trailer roughly every other year and found it to be very beneficial and have now found a virtual training simulator that we can lease and will have it all year around and will help with de-escalation and lethal and non-lethal weapons.

Deputy Chief Zecca said that there is a new training initiative which is Active Bystander for Law Enforcement (ABLE) that we are on the waiting list for and was developed by Georgetown Law to enhance police culture to officers to routinely intervene as necessary to prevent misconduct, avoid police mistakes and promote officer health and wellness.

Deputy Chief Zecca said the cost for the review credit training in included in the operating budget but all these initiatives unfortunately cost money and would need to find additional funding for and believe we can incorporate some of the funds in the operating budget and asset forfeiture, but to move forward with all the training would need a special appropriation.

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Mayor Rilling said that a lot of the training that we are doing regarding de-escalation has been ongoing in the City of Norwalk for many years and believes the Norwalk Police Department is out in front of things that have become issues nationwide. Since 1995 the department has been nationally accredited and have been able to maintain that accreditation each time there was a reassessment. He said the Chief and the Deputy Chief's should be commended for the amount of training that is being done in the department.

Commissioner Straniti thanked Deputy Chief Zecca for the wonderful presentation and asked who the liaisons are at the state and federal level specifically for emergency management.

Deputy Chief Zecca said Michelle DeLuca is the Deputy Emergency Management Director for the City of Norwalk and she is always in contact with our Region 1 resources. Commissioner Straniti asked if there is any specialized training done. Deputy Chief Zecca said "yes" over the years have done incident command and tabletop exercises on a regional basis as well as a Norwalk specific basis. Commissioner Straniti said she would be very interested to see more officers involved because the more officers the better. Deputy Chief Zecca said we do provide some training for all of the officers every year on the Norwalk All Hazard Plan.

Commissioner Straniti asked if Norwalk has a helicopter. Chief Kulhawik said there is a Fairfield County helicopter that we have access to.

Commissioner Collier-Clemmons said that all of these training programs have been very well thought out and asked if the training that is not yet funded has been prioritized. Chief Kulhawik said "yes" and we plan on moving forward with the simulator by using asset forfeiture funds, and we also plan on moving forward with one of the other trainings by using asset forfeiture funds and the operating budget. He said funding wise the biggest one that is an issue is the ABLE training because that requires the whole department to go through it.

Mayor Rilling said periodically having a presentation would be interesting and informative and suggested a presentation on the accreditation process. Chief Kulhawik said he plans on doing a presentation next month on the accreditation process.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER- CLEMMONS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dilene Byrd