Norwalk Board of Police Commissioners
Mayor Harry W. Rilling
Commissioner Fran Collier-Clemmons

CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 24, 2022

BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Rilling; Commissioner Collier-Clemmons

STAFF: Chief Thomas Kulhawik; Deputy Chief Susan Zecca

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 4:34PM. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NOVEMBER 15, 2021.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 15, 2021, AS AMENDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment this evening.

RECOGNITION

November Officer of the Month- Officer David Geismar

Chief Kulhawik said during the month of November Officer Geismar was instrumental in tracking two murder suspects that were wanted by the Stamford and Meriden Police Departments. He said that he had tracked both suspects and made arrangements with US Marshals in Florida and they were taken into custody and were extradited back to Connecticut to face charges. He said he also received a call last week from the Chief US Marshal for Connecticut wanting to let him know how much they appreciated officer Geismar's work, and for the outstanding work that he does so we wanted to recognize him for officer of the month for November.

(The commissioners offered Officer David Geismar congratulations)

December Officer of the Month- Officer Stephen Cowf

Chief Kulhawik said there was a shooting that occurred at the King Kennedy housing complex on December 10, 2021, where Officer Cowf was monitoring the radio and heard a basic description of a vehicle and saw a vehicle that fit the description and tried to stop it, but the vehicle fled so he followed the vehicle for a short distance and the occupants fled on foot but were apprehended shortly thereafter. The vehicle was searched, and the firearm was located that was used in the shooting incident. He said he joins Sergeant DeLallo on commending him for his observation and his excellent police work in apprehending the two without any further incident and want to recognize him for officer of the month for December.

(The commissioners offered Officer Stephen Cowf congratulations)

OPERATIONS REPORT

Patrol Staffing- November

Chief Kulhawik reported and said for November there were 166 sworn personnel but was down to 164 at the end of December leaving 17 patrolmen vacancies. He said that sick time and workers compensation time were consistent with previous months as well as for November and December.

Chief Kulhawik reported on the Detective Bureau and said they had made several arrests on some issues that were occurring. He said they had obtained a warrant for the suspect who had been responsible for numerous overnight car burglaries and thefts and through DNA were able link him to quite a few additional cases and he was still incarcerated the last we checked. He said the current burglary and larceny of vehicles has been much lower as a result of him not being on the street.

Chief Kulhawik noted that Detective Serio arrested a suspect for arson and criminal mischief.

Chief Kulhawik reported on the Special Services activity and said they made a significant seizure of five pounds of marijuana, and there is an ongoing investigation with a parcel carrier. He reported on the USMS activity and said they had made two high profile arrests of homicide suspects as he mentioned earlier, and that Officer Geismar served three Norwalk warrants and two out of state felony warrants.

Chief Kulhawik reported on the activity for Special Victims Unit and said they have been very busy with the schools and that there were several instances with threats that they have brought to a successful conclusion, as well as the vaping issue at Brien McMahon High School that is still under investigation. He said there was also an interesting case where an adult confronted a student on a school bus, and they were able to identify the individual and made an arrest.

Chief Kulhawik reported on the Community Policing and the traffic unit and said that staffing was removed from both units as was previously reported due to patrol manpower issues but are still operating just with less staff, but the two traffic unit officers have been out on workers compensation, so the activity is much lower for the month. He said in November the citizens police academy graduation was held, the stuff the cruiser began in preparations of the children's Christmas party. He said we had also applied for a grant for auto theft patrols for extra enforcement and partnered with our surrounding towns and worked on that with the community police unit. He said the Christmas party was held in December and that over 1,000 gifts were distributed around the community and Officer Delgado was instrumental in that.

Chief Kulhawik said the total criminal arrest for November 2021 was 131 and in December was 157, and the calls for service continue to be lower than they had been prior to the pandemic and have remained low.
Chief Kulhawik reported on the Detective Bureau caseload for November and December and said the numbers are also down and they are down one Detective because Detective Collins was at the FBI academy and graduated in December and he is expecting his resignation.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

November and December Training Reports
Deputy Chief Zecca reported on the November training report and said that the monthly training for the specialty teams was held to keep their skills efficient. She said the bulk of the rest of the training was review credit training for the officers to keep their recertification and we have offered more online training to supplement the regular training. Additionally, the firearms, low light and use of force training was held for many of the officers and the officers who needed to recertify for their NCIC certification.
Deputy Chief Zecca reported on the December training report and said the standard tactical team training and added a new crisis negotiator, so he went to a longer training to get up to speed. She said they also continued the low light training and use of force training, and the patrol supervisor had a recertification on the stop the stick training. She said the officers also had taser training and proficiency training in OC and review credit training for hate and biased crimes, juvenile matters, domestic violence and gangs and juvenile matters. She said one third of the department goes through review credit training each year so there will be multiple classes over the course of a couple of months to have them trained in those areas.
Commissioner Collier-Clemmons said that she is glad for all these classes and that they are taught in such a way that the officers retain the information and are able to use it in the moment when they interact on their various cases and is remarkable.
Mayor Rilling agreed and said it is good to see all the training that is being done and our department outside of just the review credit training which is due every three years is probably one of the most highly trained police departments.

Deputy Chief Zecca said in the use of force training they have continued to integrate the recent simulator purchase into that training so that the officers get scenario-based training.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

Drop Request- Detective Courtney Downer
**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE DROP REQUEST FOR DETECTIVE COURTNEY DOWNER BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2022 AND ENDING ON DECEMBER 31, 2027.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Tuition Reimbursement- Officer Robert Castaldi
Chief Kulhawik said this is a standard reimbursement request however, he was notified by the Deputy Chief that Commissioner Collier-Clemmons noted the amount was incorrect because he is eligible for reimbursement for half of the tuition of $4,170 and the amount should be $2,085 and he will make the correction.
**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE OFFICER CASTALDI BE REIMBURSED PURSUANT TO CONTRACT BETWEEN THE CITY OF NORWALK AND THE NORWALK POLICE UNION, AND THAT CHIEF KULHAWIK WILL MAKE THE ADJUSTMENTS TO REFLECT THE CORRECT REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNT OF $2,085.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Tuition Reimbursement- Officer Daniel Vazquez

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR OFFICER DANIEL VAZQUEZ IN THE AMOUNT OF $1,505.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Tuition Reimbursement- Sergeant Gulino

Chief Kulhawik pointed out that there is a course approval request from Sergeant Gulino as well because she did not request approval for the course prior and requests that the commission approve both the course approval and the tuition reimbursement.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE COURSE APPROVAL FOR SERGEANT GULINO IN PURSUIT OF A MASTER'S DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK AND FOR TUITION REIMBURSEMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF $1,415 FOR THE COURSE THAT WAS TAKEN.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Tuition Reimbursement- Sergeant Rafael Fonseca

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR OFFICER SERGEANT RAFAEL FONSCEA IN THE AMOUNT OF $2,937.32**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Tuition Reimbursement- Lieutenant Jared Zwickler

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR LIEUTENANT JARED ZWICKLER IN THE AMOUNT OF $893.25.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Course Approval- Officer Robert Castaldi

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE TWO TUITION REIMBURSEMENTS FOR OFFICER ROBERT CASTALDI FOR WHICH HE HAS APPLIED FOR AND ACCORDING TO THE CONTRACT CHIEF KULHAWIK WILL MAKE THE CORRECTION FOR THE CORRECT AMOUNT OF THE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT AND THE COURSE APPROVAL FOR OFFICER ROBERT CASTALDI FOR THE SUBSTITUTE COURSE THAT HE HAD TO TAKE IN ORDER TO FINISH HIS DEGREE.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chief Kulhawik said the course that Officer Castaldi is requesting to be approved is the course for the reimbursement that was approved earlier on the agenda. He said the original course that he had received approval for was not available and had to take a substitute course to finish his degree.

Course Approval- Officer Daniel Vazquez

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE COURSE APPROVAL FOR OFFICER DANIEL VAZQUEZ.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Course Approval- Lieutenant Terry Blake

Commissioner Collier-Clemmons requested that Lieutenant Blake provide the names of the courses he will be taking prior to the request for tuition reimbursement.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE COURSE APPROVAL FOR THE SIX CLASSES FOR LIEUTENANT TERRY BLAKE WITH MORE INFORMATION AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Course Approval- Officer Daniel Vazquez

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE COURSE APPROVAL FOR OFFICER DANIEL VAZQUEZ.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Master's Degree Annual Stipend- Lieutenant Jared Zwickler

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MASTER'S DEGREE ANNUAL STIPEND FOR LIEUTENANT JARED ZWICKLER**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Bachelor's Degree Annual Stipend- Officer Robert Castaldi

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE ANNUAL STIPEND FOR OFFICER ROBERT CASTALDI.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

COMPLIMENTARY LETTERS

Chief Kulhawik said he received a complimentary letter from Chief Heavey of the Greenwich Police Department for attending the Honor Guard Blue Mass.

Chief Kulhawik said that he received a complementary email from resident that was a victim of a swatting incident where officers responded, and she was very impressed on how they handled the call and made a very scary situation much less so.

Chief Kulhawik said that he received a complementary memo from the Norwalk Housing Authority for the food distribution in which officers had assisted in the turkey giveaway.

Chief Kulhawik said that he received a complementary email from the Deputy US Marshal Duffy regarding Officer Geismar for the work that he has done.

Chief Kulhawik said he received a complementary email from State's Attorney Suzanne Vieux regarding Officer Nieves's handling of the suspect and the neighbors and how his demeanor deescalated the situation.

Chief Kulhawik said he received a complimentary letter from the Fairfield County Bank commending the department and especially Detective Sura regarding a bank robbery that occurred at their location.

Chief Kulhawik said there was a post on social media thanking the officers that responded to a call that she was a victim of.

Chief Kulhawik said he received a complementary email from Norwalk Public Schools commending Officer Taborda regarding the work that he had done for one of the hoaxes at Norwalk High School that occurred.

Chief Kulhawik said he received a note commending Officer Zavitz regarding a property line dispute.

Chief Kulhawik said he received a thank you email from one of the parents whose daughter and son attended the children's SONO holiday party.

Chief Kulhawik said he received a complementary email from Norwalk Public Schools commenting on how Officer Martinez who investigated a cyber blackmailing scheme on her son and was appreciative of the work that he did on that.

Chief Kulhawik said he received a complementary text message from Mr. Snead regarding a medical incident that he had and how officer Amparo had handled the call with great compassion and understanding.

Chief Kulhawik said he received a complementary email regarding an incident and officer Kassimis, officer Torreso and Sergeant Cisero regarding a family member and wanted to let us know that she appreciated the officers and how they responded.

Chief Kulhawik said he received a complementary email regarding the officer Tyrone Boyd regarding an incident at the South Norwalk Railroad Station

(The commissioners offered their congratulations and thanks to the people for taking the time for sending the complementary emails)

EXECUTIVE SESSION
DISCUSSION OF DISABILITY PENSION ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICER THEODORE GARBERA AND OFFICER ADAM MULKERN

Executive session began at 5:22PM.
Executive session ended at 5:37PM.

There were no motions made and no votes were taken.

**** COMMISSIONER COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE DISABILITY PENSION ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICER THEODORE GARBERA AND OFFICER ADAM MULKERN AS SUBMITTED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:40PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd

,